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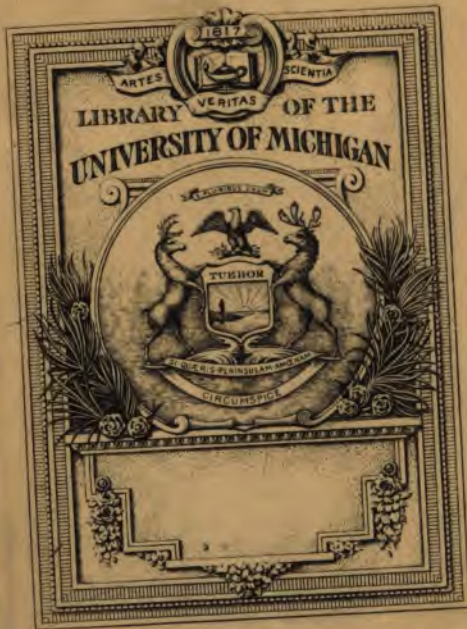
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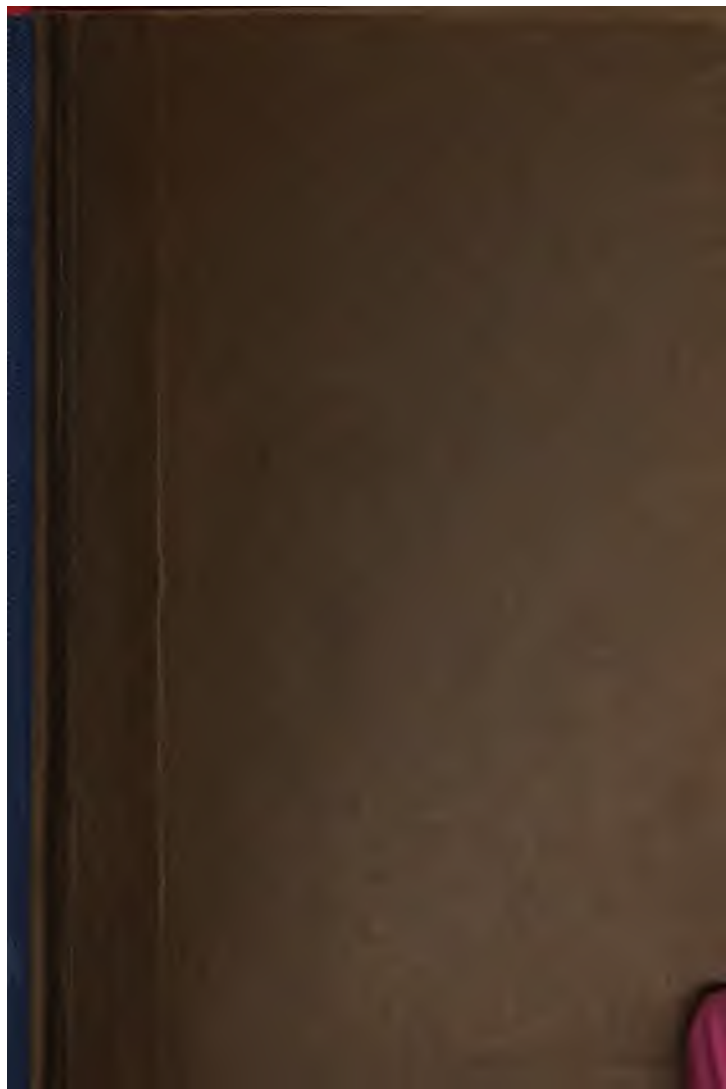
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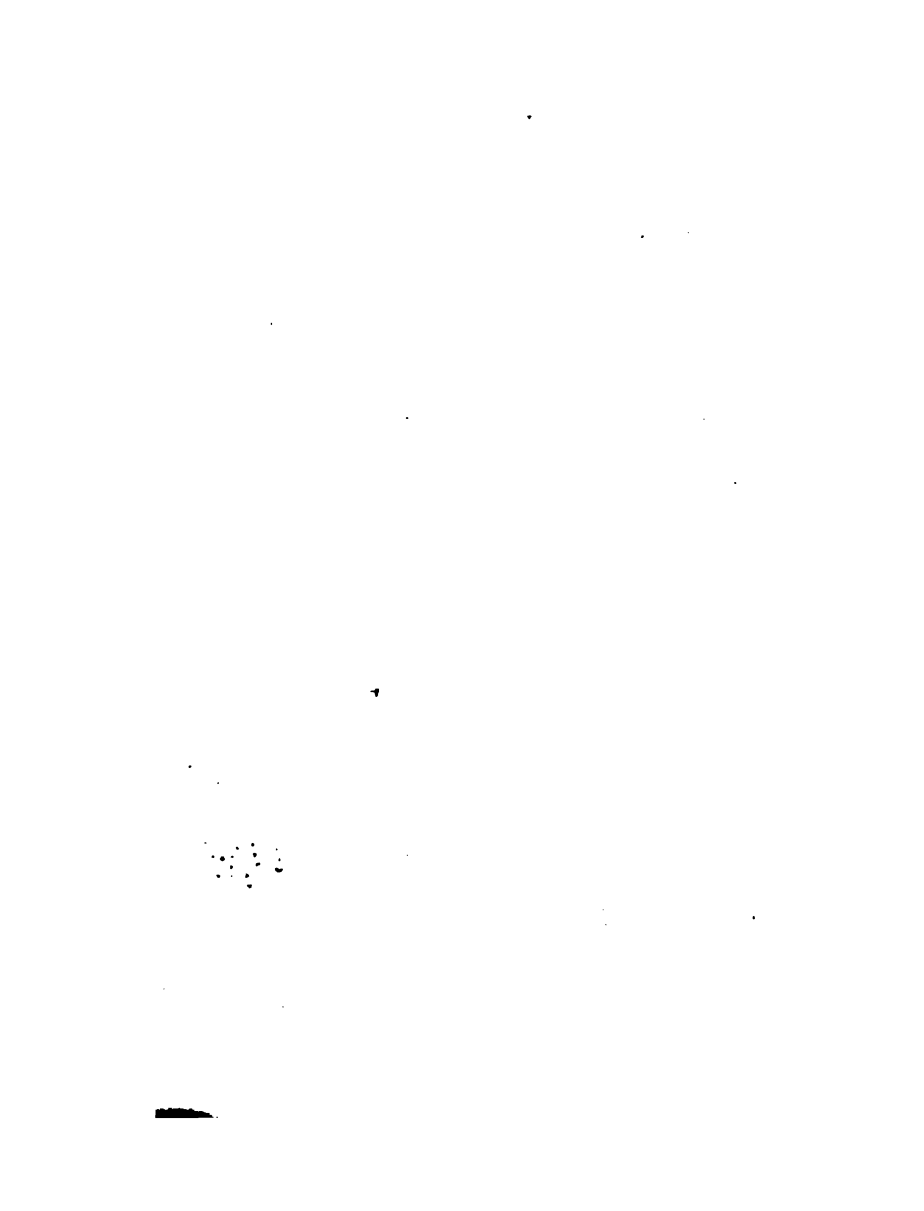
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LIFE OF

FREDERICK THE GREAT

BY
T. B. MACAULAY

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FREDERICK THE GREAT.

THE Prussian monarchy, the youngest of the great European States, but in population and in revenue the fifth amongst them, and in art, science, and civilization entitled to the third if not the second place, sprang from an humble origin. About the beginning of the fifteenth century, the marquisate of Brandenburg was bestowed by the Emperor Sigismund on the noble family of Hohenzollern. In the sixteenth century, that family embraced the Lutheran doctrines. Early in the seventeenth century it obtained from the King of Poland the investiture of the duchy of Prussia. Even after his accession of territory, the chiefs of the house of Hohenzollern hardly ranked with the Electors of Saxony and Bavaria. The soil of Brandenburg was, for the most part, sterile. Even around Berlin, the capital of the province, and around Potsdam, the favorite residence of the Margraves, the country was a desert. In some tracts the deep sand could with difficulty be forced by assiduous tillage to yield thin crops of rye and oats. In other places, the ancient forests, from which the conquerors of the Roman empire had descended on the Danube, remained untouched by the hand of man. Where the soil was rich it was gen-

erally marshy, and its insalubrity repelled the cultivators whom its fertility attracted. Frederick William, called the Great Elector, was the prince to whose policy his successors have agreed to ascribe their greatness. He acquired by the peace of Westphalia several valuable possessions, and among them the rich city and district of Magdeburg; and he left to his son Frederick a principality as considerable as any which was not called a kingdom.

Frederick aspired to the style of royalty. Ostentatious and profuse, negligent of his true interests and of his high duties, insatiably eager for frivolous distinctions, he added nothing to the real weight of the State which he governed; but he gained the great object of his life, the title of king. In the year 1700 he assumed this new dignity. He had on that occasion to undergo all the mortifications which fall to the lot of ambitious upstarts. Compared with the other crowned heads of Europe, he made a figure resembling that which a Nabob or a Commissary, who had bought a title, would make in the company of Peers whose ancestors had been attainted for treason against the Plantagenets.

The envy of the class which he quitted, and the civil scorn of the class into which he intruded himself, were marked in very significant ways. The elector of Saxony at first refused to acknowledge the new majesty. Louis the Fourteenth looked down on his brother king with an air not unlike that with which the count in Molière's play regards Monsieur Jourdain, just fresh from the mummery of being *made a gentleman*. Austria exacted large sacrifice

in return for her recognition, and at last gave it ungraciously.

Frederick was succeeded by his son, Frederick William, a prince who must be allowed to have possessed some talents for administration, but whose character was disfigured by the most odious vices, and whose eccentricities were such as had never been seen out of a mad-house. He was exact and diligent in the transaction of business, and he was the first who formed the design of obtaining for Prussia a place among the European powers, altogether out of proportion to her extent and population, by means of a strong military organization. Strict economy enabled him to keep up a peace establishment of sixty thousand troops. These troops were disciplined in such a manner, that, placed beside them, the household regiments of Versailles and St. James would have appeared an awkward squad. The master of such a force could not but be regarded by all his neighbors as a formidable enemy and a valuable ally.

But the mind of Frederick William was so ill-regulated that all his inclinations became passions, and all his passions partook of the character of moral and intellectual disease. His parsimony degenerated into sordid avarice. His taste for military pomp and order became a mania, like that of a Dutch burgo-master for tulips. While the envoys of the court of Berlin were in a state of such squalid poverty as moved the laughter of foreign capitals—while the food of the royal family was so bad that even hunger loathed it—no price was thought too extravagant

for tall recruits. The ambition of the king was to form a brigade of giants, and every country was ransacked by his agents for men above the ordinary stature. These researches were not confined to Europe. No head that towered above the crowd in the bazaars of Aleppo, of Cairo, or of Surat, could escape the crimps of Frederick William. One Irishman more than seven feet high, who was picked up in London by the Prussian ambassador, received a bounty of nearly £1300 sterling—very much more than the ambassador's salary. This extravagance was the more absurd because a stout youth of five feet eight, who might have been procured for a few dollars, would in all probability have been a much more valuable soldier. But to Frederick William this huge Irishman was what a brass Otho or a Vinegar Bible is to a collector of a different kind.*

* Carlyle thus describes the Potsdam Regiment:—"A Potsdam Giant Regiment, such as the world never saw before or since. Three Battalions of them—two always here at Potsdam doing formal life-guard duty, the third at Brandenburg on drill, 800 to the Battalion—2,400 sons of Anak in all. Sublime enough, hugely perfect to the royal eye, such a mass of shining giants, in their long-drawn regularities and mathematical maneuverings, like some streak of Promethean lightning, realized here at last in the vulgar dusk of things.

"Truly they are men supreme in discipline, in beauty of equipment, and the shortest man of them rises, I think, towards seven feet; some are nearly nine feet high. Men from all countries: a hundred and odd come annually, as we saw, from Russia—a very precious windfall: the rest have been collected, crimped, purchased, out of every European country at enormous expense, not to speak of other trouble to His Majesty. James Kirkman, an Irish recruit of good inches

It is remarkable that, though the main end of Frederick William's administration was to have a military force, though his reign forms an important epoch in the history of military discipline, and though his dominant passion was the love of military display, he was yet one of the most pacific of princes. We are afraid that his aversion to war was not the effect of humanity, but was merely one of his thousand whims. His feeling about his troops seems to have resembled a miser's feeling about his money. He loved to collect them, to count them, to see them increase, but he could not find it in his heart to break in upon the precious hoard. He looked forward to some future time when his Patagonian battalions were to drive hostile infantry before them

cost him £1200 before he could be got inveigled, shipped, and brought safe to hand. The documents are yet in existence: and the portrait of this Irish fellow-citizen himself, who is by no means a beautiful man. Indeed, they are all portrayed—all the privates of this distinguished Regiment are, if anybody cared to look at them. 'Redivanoff from Moscow' seems of far better bone than Kirkman, though still more stolid of aspect. One Hohmann, a born Prussian, was so tall you could not, though you yourself tall, touch his bare crown with your hand; August the Strong of Poland tried on one occasion and could not. Before Hohmann turned up there had been 'Jonas, the Norwegian Blacksmith,' also a dreadfully tall monster. Giant 'Macdoll'—who was to be married, no consent asked on *either* side, to the tall young woman, which latter turned out to be a decrepit *old* woman, (all Jest-Books know the myth)—he also was an Irish giant, his name probably M'Dowal. This Hohmann was now *Füglemann* ('fugleman' as we have named it, leader of the file), the Tallest of the Regiment, a very mountain of pipe-clayed flesh and bone."

like sheep. But this future time was always receding, and it is probable that if his life had been prolonged thirty years his superb army would never have seen any harder service than a sham fight in the fields near Berlin. But the great military means which he had collected were destined to be employed by a spirit far more daring and inventive than his own.

Frederick, surnamed the Great, son of Frederick William, was born in January, 1712. It may safely be pronounced that he had received from nature a strong and sharp understanding, and a rare firmness of temper and intensity of will. As to the other parts of his character, it is difficult to say whether they are to be ascribed to nature or to the strange training which he underwent. The history of his boyhood is painfully interesting. Oliver Twist in the parish work-house, Smike at Dotheboys Hall, were petted children when compared with this wretched heir-apparent of a crown. The nature of Frederick William was hard and bad, and the habit of exercising arbitrary power had made him frightfully savage. His rage constantly vented itself to right and left in curses and blows. When his majesty took a walk, every human being fled before him as if a tiger had broken loose from a menagerie. If he met a lady in the street he gave her a kick and told her to go home and mind her brats. If he saw a clergyman staring at the soldiers, he admonished the reverend gentleman to betake himself to study and prayer, and enforced this pious advice by a *sound caning*, administered on the spot. But it was

in his own house that he was most unreasonable and ferocious. His palace was hell, and he the most execrable of fiends—a cross between Moloch and Puck. His son Frederick * and his daughter Wilhelmina, afterwards Margravine of Bareuth, were in an especial manner objects of his aversion. His own mind was uncultivated. He despised literature. He hated infidels, Papists, and metaphysicians, and did not very well understand in what they differed from each other. The business of life, according to him, was to drill and to be drilled. The recreations suited to a prince were to sit in a cloud of tobacco smoke, to sip Swedish beer between the puffs of the pipe, to

* The following is his answer to an humble supplication of Friedrich's for forgiveness:—

“Thy [in German the contemptuous third person singular is used] obstinate perverse disposition (*Kopf*, head), which does not love thy Father—for when one does everything, and really loves one's Father, one does what the Father requires, not while he is there to see it, but when his back is turned too. For the rest, thou know'st very well that I can endure no effeminate fellow (*efeminirten Kerl*), who has no human inclination in him; who puts himself to shame, cannot ride nor shoot, and withal is dirty in his person: frizzles his hair like a fool, and does not cut it off. And all this I have a thousand times reprimanded; but all in vain, and no improvement in nothing (*keine Besserung in nichts ist*). For the rest, haughty, proud as a churl; speaks to nobody but some few, and is not popular and affable; and cuts grimaces with his face, as if he were a fool; and does my will in nothing unless held to it by force; nothing out of love;—and has pleasure in nothing but following his own whims (own *Kopf*)—no use to him in anything else. This is the answer.

FREDERICK WILHELM.”

Carlyle (vol. ii., pp. 47, 48.)

play backgammon for three halfpence a rubber, to kill wild hogs, and to shoot partridges by the thousand. The Prince-Royal showed little inclination either for the serious employments or for the amusements of his father. He shirked the duties of the parade—he detested the fume of tobacco—he had no taste either for backgammon or for field sports. He had received from nature an exquisite ear, and performed skillfully on the flute. His earliest instructors had been French refugees, and they had awakened in him a strong passion for French literature and French society. Frederick William regarded these tastes as effeminate and contemptible, and by abuse and persecution made them still stronger. Things became worse when the Prince-Royal attained that time of life at which the great revolution in the human mind and body takes place. He was guilty of some youthful indiscretions, which no good and wise parent would regard with severity. At a later period he was accused, truly or falsely, of vices from which History averts her eyes and which even satire blushes to name—vices such that, to borrow the energetic language of Lord-Keeper Coventry, “the depraved nature of man, which of itself carrieth man to all other sin, abhorreth them.” But the offenses of his youth were not characterized by any peculiar turpitude. They excited, however, transports of rage in the king, who hated all faults except those to which he was himself inclined, and who conceived that he made ample atonement to Heaven for his brutality, by holding the softer passions in detestation. The Prince-

Royal, too, was not one of those who are content to take their religion on trust. He asked puzzling questions, and brought forward arguments which seemed to savor of something different from pure Lutheranism. The king suspected that his son was inclined to be a heretic of some sort or other, whether Calvinist or Atheist, his majesty did not very well know. The ordinary malignity of Frederick William was bad enough. He now thought malignity a part of his duty as a Christian man, and all the conscience that he had stimulated his hatred. The flute was broken—the French books were sent out of the palace—the prince was kicked and cudgelled and pulled by the hair. At dinner the plates were hurled at his head—sometimes he was restricted to bread and water—sometimes he was forced to swallow food so nauseous that he could not keep it on his stomach. Once his father knocked him down, dragged him along the floor to a window, and was with difficulty prevented from strangling him with the cord of the curtain. The queen, for the crime of not wishing to see her son murdered, was subjected to the grossest indignities. The Princess Wilhelmina, who took her brother's part, was treated almost as ill as Mrs. Brownrigg's apprentices. Driven to despair, the unhappy youth tried to run away; then the fury of the old tyrant rose to madness. The prince was an officer in the army; his flight was therefore desertion, and, in the moral code of Frederick William, desertion was the highest of all crimes. "Desertion," says this royal theologian in one of his half-crazy letters, "is from hell. It is a

work of the children of the devil. No child of God could possibly be guilty of it." An accomplice of the prince, in spite of the recommendation of a court-martial, was mercilessly put to death. It seemed probable that the prince himself would suffer the same fate. It was with difficulty that the intercession of the States of Holland, of the Kings of Sweden and Poland, and of the Emperor of Germany, saved the house of Brandenburg from the stain of an unnatural murder. After months of cruel suspense, Frederick learned that his life would be spared. He remained, however, long a prisoner; but he was not on that account to be pitied. He found in his jailors a tenderness which he had never found in his father; his table was not sumptuous, but he had wholesome food in sufficient quantity to appease hunger; he could read the *Henriade* without being kicked, and play on his flute without having it broken over his head.

When his confinement terminated, he was a man. He had nearly completed his twenty-first year, and could scarcely, even by such a parent as Frederick William, be kept much longer under the restraints which had made his boyhood miserable. Suffering had matured his understanding, while it had hardened his heart and soured his temper. He had learnt self-command and dissimulation; he affected to conform to some of his father's views, and submissively accepted a wife, who was a wife only in name, from his father's hand. He also served with credit, though without any opportunity of acquiring brilliant distinction, under the command of Prince

Eugene, during a campaign marked by no extraordinary events. He was now permitted to keep a separate establishment, and was therefore able to indulge with caution his own tastes. Partly in order to conciliate the king, and partly, no doubt, from inclination, he gave up a portion of his time to military and political business, and thus gradually acquired such an aptitude for affairs as his most intimate associates were not aware that he possessed.

His favorite abode was at Rheinsberg, near the frontier which separates the Prussian dominions from the duchy of Mecklenburg. Rheinsberg is a fertile and smiling spot, in the midst of the sandy waste of the Marquisate. The mansion, surrounded by woods of oak and beech, looks out upon a spacious lake. There Frederick amused himself by laying out gardens in regular alleys and intricate mazes, by building obelisks, temples, and conservatories, and by collecting rare fruits and flowers. His retirement was enlivened by a few companions, among whom he seems to have preferred those who, by birth or extraction, were French. With these inmates he dined and supped well, drank freely, and amused himself sometimes with concerts, sometimes with holding chapters of a fraternity which he called the Order of Bayard; but literature was his chief resource.

His education had been entirely French. The long ascendancy which Louis XIV. had enjoyed, and the eminent merit of the tragic and comic dramatists, of the satirists, and of the preachers who had flourished under that magnificent prince, had made

the French language predominant in Europe. Even in countries which had a national literature, and which could boast of names greater than those of Racine, of Molière, and of Massillon—in the country of Dante, in the country of Cervantes, in the country of Shakespeare and Milton—the intellectual fashions of Paris had been to a great extent adopted. Germany had not yet produced a single masterpiece of poetry or eloquence. In Germany, therefore, the French taste reigned without rival and without limit. Every youth of rank was taught to speak and write French. That he should speak and write his own tongue with politeness, or even with accuracy and facility, was regarded as comparatively an unimportant object. Even Frederick William, with all his rugged Saxon prejudices, thought it necessary that his children should know French, and quite unnecessary that they should be well versed in German. The Latin was positively interdicted. "My son," His Majesty wrote, "shall not learn Latin; and, more than that, I will not suffer anybody even to mention such a thing to me." One of the preceptors ventured to read the Golden Bull in the original with the Prince-Royal. Frederick William entered the room, and broke out in his usual kingly style.

"Rascal, what are you at there?"

"Please Your Majesty," answered the preceptor, "I was explaining the Golden Bull to His Royal Highness."

"I'll Golden Bull you, you rascal," roared the majesty of Prussia. Up went the king's cane, away ran the terrified instructor, and Frederick's classical

studies ended forever. He now and then affected to quote Latin sentences, and produced such exquisite Ciceronian phrases as these: "Stante pede morire"—"De gustibus non est disputandus"—"Tot verbas tot spondera." Of Italian, he had not enough to read a page of Metastasio with ease, and of the Spanish and English, he did not, as far as we are aware, understand a single word.

As the highest human compositions to which he had access were those of the French writers, it is not strange that his admiration for those writers should have been unbounded. His ambitious and eager temper early prompted him to imitate what he admired. The wish, perhaps, dearest to his heart was, that he might rank among the masters of French rhetoric and poetry. He wrote prose and verse as indefatigably as if he had been a starving hack of Cave or Osborn; but Nature, which had bestowed on him in a large measure the talents of a captain and of an administrator, had withheld from him those higher and rarer gifts, without which industry labors in vain to produce immortal eloquence or song. And, indeed, had he been blessed with more imagination, wit, and fertility of thought than he appears to have had, he would still have been subject to one great disadvantage, which would, in all probability, have forever prevented him from taking a high place among men of letters. He had not the full command of any language. There was no machine of thought which he could employ with perfect ease, confidence, and freedom. He had German enough to scold his servants or to give, the word of com-

mand to his grenadiers; but his grammar and pronunciation were extremely bad. He found it difficult to make out the meaning even of the simplest German poetry. On one occasion a version of Racine's *Iphigénie* was read to him. He held the French original in his hand; but was forced to own that, even with such help, he could not understand the translation. Yet though he had neglected his mother tongue in order to bestow all his attention on French, his French was, after all, the French of a foreigner. It was necessary for him to have always at his beck some men of letters from Paris to point out the solecisms and false rhymes, of which, to the last, he was frequently guilty. Even had he possessed the poetic faculty—of which, as far as we can judge, he was utterly destitute—the want of a language would have prevented him from being a great poet. No noble work of imagination, as far as we recollect, was ever composed by any man, except in a dialect which he had learned without remembering how or when, and which he had spoken with perfect ease before he had ever analyzed its structure. Romans of great talents wrote Greek verses; but how many of those verses have deserved to live? Many men of eminent genius have, in modern times, written Latin poems; but, as far as we are aware, none of those poems, not even Milton's, can be ranked in the first class of art, or even very high in the second. It is not strange, therefore, that in the French verses of Frederick, we can find nothing beyond the reach of any man of good parts and industry—nothing above the level of Newdigate and

Seatonian poetry. His best pieces may perhaps rank with the worst in Dodsley's collection. In history he succeeded better. We do not, indeed, find in any part of his voluminous Memoirs either deep reflection or vivid painting. But the narrative is distinguished by clearness, conciseness, good sense, and a certain air of truth and simplicity, which is singularly graceful in a man who, having done great things, sits down to relate them. On the whole, however, none of his writings are so agreeable to us as his Letters; particularly those which are written with earnestness, and are not embroidered with verses.

It is not strange that a young man devoted to literature, and acquainted only with the literature of France, should have looked with profound veneration on the genius of Voltaire. Nor is it just to condemn him for this feeling. "A man who has never seen the sun," says Calderon in one of his charming comedies, "cannot be blamed for thinking that no glory can exceed that of the moon. A man who has seen neither moon nor sun cannot be blamed for talking of the unrivaled brightness of the morning star." Had Frederick been able to read Homer and Milton, or even Virgil and Tasso, his admiration of the *Henriade* would prove that he was utterly destitute of the power of discerning what is excellent in art. Had he been familiar with Sophocles or Shakespeare, we should have expected him to appreciate *Zaire* more justly. Had he been able to study Thucydides and Tacitus in the original Greek and Latin, he would have known that there were

heights in the eloquence of history far beyond the reach of the author of the *Life of Charles the Twelfth*. But the finest heroic poem, several of the most powerful tragedies, and the most brilliant and picturesque historical work that Frederick had ever read, were Voltaire's. Such high and various excellence moved the young prince almost to adoration. The opinions of Voltaire on religious and philosophical questions had not yet been fully exhibited to the public. At a later period, when an exile from his country, and at open war with the Church, he spoke out. But when Frederick was at Rheinsberg, Voltaire was still a courtier; and, though he could not always curb his petulant wit, he had, as yet, published nothing that could exclude him from Versailles, and little that a divine of the mild and generous school of Grotius and Tillotson might not read with pleasure. In the *Henriade*, in *Zaire*, and in *Aleire*, Christian piety is exhibited in the most amiable form; and, some years after the period of which we are writing, a Pope condescended to accept the dedication of *Mahomet*. The real sentiments of the poet, however, might be clearly perceived by a keen eye through the decent disguise with which he veiled them, and could not escape the sagacity of Frederick, who held similar opinions, and had been accustomed to practise simliar dissimulation.

The prince wrote to his idol in the style of a worshiper, and Voltaire replied with exquisite grace and address. A correspondence followed, which may be studied with advantage by those who wish to become proficient in the ignoble art of flattery.

No man ever paid compliments better than Voltaire. His sweetened confectionery had always a delicate, yet stimulating flavor, which was delightful to palates wearied by the coarse preparations of inferior artists. It was only from his hand that so much sugar could be swallowed without making the swallower sick. Copies of verses, writing-desks, trinkets of amber, were exchanged between the friends. Frederick confided his writings to Voltaire, and Voltaire applauded as if Frederick had been Racine and Bossuet in one. One of His Royal Highness's performances was a refutation of the *Principe* of Machiavelli. Voltaire undertook to convey it to the press. It was entitled the *Anti-Machiavel*, and was an edifying homily against rapacity, perfidy, arbitrary government, unjust war—in short, against almost everything for which its author is now remembered among men.

The old king uttered now and then a ferocious growl at the diversions of Rheinsberg. But his health was broken, his end was approaching, and his vigor was impaired. He had only one pleasure left—that of seeing tall soldiers. He could always be propitiated by a present of a grenadier of six feet eight or six feet nine; and such presents were from time to time judiciously offered by his son.

Early in the year 1740, Frederick William * met

* Macaulay is a little too harsh with the old king. The following extract from Carlyle's recent *Life of Frederick the Great*, describing the last hours of Friedrich Wilhelm, will show something better in his character: "For the rest, he is struggling between death and life, in general persuaded that

death with a firmness and dignity worthy of a better and wiser man; and Frederick, who had just completed his twenty-eighth year, became King of Prussia. His character was little understood. That he had good abilities, indeed, no person who had talked with him or corresponded with him could doubt. But the easy, Epicurean life which he had led, his love of good cookery and good wine, of music, of conversation, of light literature, led many to regard him as a sensual and intellectual voluptuary. His habit of canting about moderation, peace, liberty, and the happiness which a good mind derives from the hap-

the end is fast hastening on. He sends for Chief-Praecher Roloff out to Potsdam; has some notable dialogues with Roloff, and with two other Potsdam clergymen, of which there is record still left us. In these, as in all his demeanor at this supreme time, we see the big, rugged block of manhood come out very vividly: strong in his simplicity, in his veracity. Friedrich Wilhelm's wish is to know from Roloff what the chances are for him in the other world—which is not less certain than Potsdam and the giant grenadiers to Friedrich Wilhelm; and where, he perceives, never half so clearly before, he shall actually peel off his Kinghood and stand before God Almighty no better than a naked beggar. Roloff's prognostics are not so encouraging as the King had hoped. Surely this King 'never took or coveted what was not his: kept true to his marriage-vow, in spite of horrible examples everywhere; believed the Bible, honored the Preachers, went diligently to Church, and tried to do what he understood God's commandments were?' To all which Roloff, a courageous, pious man, answers with discreet words and shakings of the head. 'Did I behave ill then, did I ever do injustice? Roloff mentions Baron Schlubhut, the defalcating Amtmann, hanged at Königsberg without even a trial. 'He had no trial; but was there any doubt he had justice? A

piness of others, had imposed on some who should have known better. Those who thought best of him expected a Telemachus after Fénélon's pattern. Others predicted the approach of a Medicean age—an age propitious to learning and art, and not unpropitious to pleasure. Nobody had the least suspicion that a tyrant of extraordinary military and political talents, of industry more extraordinary still, without fear, without faith, and without mercy, had ascended the throne.

The disappointment of Falstaff at his old boon companion's coronation was not more bitter than that which awaited some of the inmates of Rheins-

public thief, confessing he had stolen the taxes he was set to gather: insolently offering, as if that were all, to repay the money, and saying, It was not *Manier* (good manners) to hang a nobleman! ' Roloff shakes his head, 'Too violent, Your Majesty, and savoring of the tyrannous. The poor King must repent.'

"Well—is there anything more? Out with it, then: better now than too late!' [And certain building operations of an oppressive character come under review.] . . . 'And then there is forgiveness of enemies; Your Majesty is bound to forgive all men, or how can you ask to be forgiven?'—'Well I will; I do. You Feekin [his wife, Queen Sophie], write to your brother (unforgiveablest of beings), after I am dead, that I forgave him, died in peace with him.'—'Better Her Majesty should write at once,' suggests Roloff.—'No, after I am dead,' persists the son of nature—that will be safer!' An unwedgeable and gnarled big block of manhood and simplicity and sincerity; such as we rarely get sight of among the modern sons of Adam, among the crowned sons nearly never. At parting he said to Roloff, 'You (*Er*, He) do not spare me; it is right. You do your duty like an honest Christian man'" (vol. II., pp. 681-688).

berg. They had long looked forward to the accession of their patron, as to the day from which their own prosperity and greatness was to date. They had at last reached the promised land, the land which they had figured to themselves as flowing with milk and honey, and they found it a desert. "No more of these fooleries," was the short, sharp admonition given by Frederick to one of them. It soon became plain that, in the most important points, the new sovereign bore a strong family likeness to his predecessor. There was a wide difference between the father and the son as respected extent and vigor of intellect, speculative opinions, amusements, studies, outward demeanor. But the groundwork of the character was the same in both. To both were common the love of order, the love of business, the military taste, the parsimony, the imperious spirit, the temper irritable even to ferocity, the pleasure in the pain and humiliation of others. But these propensities had in Frederick William partaken of the general unsoundness of his mind, and wore a very different aspect when found in company with the strong and cultivated understanding of his successor. Thus, for example, Frederick was as anxious as any prince could be about the efficacy of his army. But this anxiety never degenerated into a monomania, like that which led his father to pay fancy prices for giants. Frederick was as thrifty about money as any prince or any private man ought to be. But he did not conceive, like his father, that it was worth while to eat unwholesome cabbages for the sake of saving four c

five six dollars in the year. Frederick was, we fear, as malevolent as his father; but Frederick's wit enabled him often to show his malevolence in ways more decent than those to which his father resorted, and to inflict misery and degradation by a taunt instead of blow. Frederick it is true by no means relinquished his hereditary privilege of kicking and cudgelling. His practice, however, as to that matter differed in some important respects from his father's. To Frederick William, the mere circumstance that any persons whatever, men, women, or children, Prussians or foreigners, were within reach of his toes and of his cane, appeared to be a sufficient reason for proceeding to belabor them. Frederick required provocation as well as vicinity; nor was he ever known to inflict this paternal species of correction on any but his born subjects; though on one occasion M. Thiébauld had reason during a few seconds to anticipate the high honor of being an exception to this general rule.

The character of Frederick was still very imperfectly understood either by his subjects or by his neighbors, when events occurred which exhibited it in a strong light. A few months after his accession died Charles VI., Emperor of Germany, the last descendant in the male line of the house of Austria.

Charles left no son, and had long before his death relinquished all hopes of male issue. During the latter part of his life his principal object had been to secure to his descendants in the female line the many crowns of the house of Hapsburg. With this view, he had promulgated a new law of succession

widely celebrated throughout Europe under the name of the "Pragmatic Sanction." By virtue of this decree, his daughter, the Archduchess Maria Theresa, wife of Francis of Lorraine, succeeded to the dominions of her ancestors.

No sovereign has ever taken possession of a throne by a clearer title. All the politics of the Austrian cabinet had during twenty years been directed to one single end—the settlement of the succession. From every person whose rights could be considered as injuriously affected, renunciations in the most solemn form had been obtained. The new law had been ratified by the Estates of all the kingdoms and principalities which made up the great Austrian monarchy. England, France, Spain, Russia, Poland, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, the Germanic body, had bound themselves by treaty to maintain the "Pragmatic Sanction." That instrument was placed under the protection of the public faith of the whole civilized world.

Even if no positive stipulations on this subject had existed, the arrangement was one which no good man would have been willing to disturb. It was a peaceable arrangement. It was an arrangement acceptable to the great population whose happiness was chiefly concerned. It was an arrangement which made no change in the distribution of power among the states of Christendom. It was an arrangement which could be set aside only by means of a general war; and, if it were set aside, the effect would be that the equilibrium of Europe would be deranged, that the loyal and patriotic feelings of

millions would be cruelly outraged, and that great provinces which had been united for centuries would be torn from each other by main force.

The sovereigns of Europe were therefore bound by every obligation which those who are intrusted with power over their fellow-creatures ought to hold most sacred, to respect and defend the right of the Archduchess. Her situation and her personal qualities were such as might be expected to move the mind of any generous man to pity, admiration, and chivalrous tenderness. She was in her twenty-fourth year. Her form was majestic, her features beautiful, her countenance sweet and animated, her voice musical, her deportment gracious and dignified. In all domestic relations she was without reproach. She was married to a husband whom she loved, and was on the point of giving birth to a child when death deprived her of her father. The loss of a parent and the new cares of the empire were too much for her in the delicate state of her health. Her spirits were depressed and her cheek lost its bloom.

Yet it seemed that she had little cause for anxiety. It seemed that justice, humanity, and the faith of treaties would have their due weight, and that the settlement so solemnly guaranteed would be quietly carried into effect. England, Russia, Poland, and Holland declared in form their intention to adhere to their engagements. The French ministers made a verbal declaration to the same effect. But from no quarter did the young Queen of Hungary receive stronger assurances of friendship and support than from the King of Prussia.

Yet the King of Prussia, the "Anti-Machiavel," had already fully determined to commit the great crime of violating his plighted faith, of robbing the ally whom he was bound to defend, and of plunging all Europe into a long, bloody, and desolating war, and all this for no end whatever except that he might extend his dominions and see his name in the gazettes. He determined to assemble a great army with speed and secrecy to invade Silesia before Maria Theresa should be apprised of his design, and to add that rich province to his kingdom.

We will not condescend to refute at length the pleas . . . [put forth by] Doctor Preuss. They amount to this—that the house of Brandenburg had some ancient pretensions to Silesia, and had in the previous century been compelled, by hard usage on the part of the court of Vienna, to waive those pretensions. It is certain that whoever might originally have been in the right Prussia had submitted. Prince after prince of the house of Brandenburg had acquiesced in the existing arrangement. Nay, the court of Berlin had recently been allied with that of Vienna, and had guaranteed the integrity of the Austrian states. Is it not perfectly clear that if antiquated claims are to be set up against recent treaties and long possession, the world can never be at peace for a day? The laws of all nations have wisely established a time of limitation, after which titles, however illegitimate in their origin, cannot be questioned. It is felt by everybody that to eject a person from his estate on the ground of some injustice committed in the time of the Tudors, would

produce all the evils which result from arbitrary confiscation, and would make all property insecure. It concerns the commonwealth—so runs the legal maxim—that there be an end of litigation. And surely this maxim is at least equally applicable to the great commonwealth of states, for in that commonwealth litigation means the devastation of provinces, the suspension of trade and industry, sieges like those of Badajoz and St. Sebastian, pitched fields like those of Eylau and Borodino. We hold that the transfer of Norway from Denmark to Sweden was an unjustifiable proceeding; but would the King of Denmark be therefore justified in landing without any new provocation in Norway, and commencing military operations there? The King of Holland thinks, no doubt, that he was unjustly deprived of the Belgian provinces. Grant that it were so. Would he, therefore, be justified in marching with an army on Brussels? The case against Frederick was still stronger, inasmuch as the injustice of which he complained had been committed more than a century before. Nor must it be forgotten that he owed the highest personal obligations to the house of Austria. It may be doubted whether his life had not been preserved by the intercession of the prince whose daughter he was about to plunder.

To do the king justice, he pretended to no more virtue than he had. In manifestoes he might, for form's sake, insert some idle stories about his antiquated claim on Silesia; but in his conversations and Memoirs he took a very different tone. To quote his own words—"Ambition, interest, the desire of

making people talk about me, carried the day, and I decided for war."

Having resolved on his course, he acted with ability and vigor. It was impossible wholly to conceal his preparations, for throughout the Prussian territories regiments, guns, and baggage were in motion. The Austrian envoy at Berlin apprised his court of these facts, and expressed a suspicion of Frederick's designs; but the ministers of Maria Theresa refused to give credit to so black an imputation on a young prince who was known chiefly by his high professions of integrity and philanthropy. "We will not," they wrote, "we cannot believe it."

In the mean time the Prussian forces had been assembled. Without any declaration of war, without any demand for reparation, in the very act of pouring forth compliments and assurances of good-will, Frederick commenced hostilities. Many thousands of his troops were actually in Silesia before the Queen of Hungary knew that he had set up any claim to any part of her territories. At length he sent her a message which could be regarded only as an insult. If she would but let him have Silesia, he would, he said, stand by her against any power which should try to deprive her of her other dominions: as if he was not already bound to stand by her, or as if his new promise could be of more value than the old one!

It was the depth of winter. The cold was severe and the roads deep in mire. But the Prussians passed on. Resistance was impossible. The *Austrian army* was then neither numerous nor effi-

The small portion of that army which lay in Silesia was unprepared for hostilities. Glogau was blockaded; Breslau opened its gates; Ohlau was evacuated. A few scattered garrisons still held out; but the whole open country was subjugated; no enemy ventured to encounter the king in the field; and before the end of January, 1741, he returned to receive the congratulations of his subjects at Berlin.

Had the Silesian question been merely a question between Frederick and Maria Theresa, it would be impossible to acquit the Prussian king of gross perfidy. But when we consider the effects which his policy produced, and could not fail to produce, on the whole community of civilized nations, we are compelled to pronounce a condemnation still more severe. Till he began the war it seemed possible, even probable, that the peace of the world would be preserved. The plunder of the great Austrian heritage was indeed a strong temptation; and in more than one cabinet ambitious schemes were already meditated. But the treaties by which the "Pragmatic Sanction" had been guaranteed were express and recent. To throw all Europe into confusion for a purpose clearly unjust was no light matter. England was true to her engagements. The voice of Fleury had always been for peace. He had a conscience. He was now in extreme old age, and was unwilling, after a life which, when his situation was considered, must be pronounced singularly pure, to carry the fresh stain of a great crime before the tribunal of his God. Even the vain and unprincipled *Belle-Isle*, whose whole life was one wild day-dream

of conquest and spoliation, felt that France, bound as she was by solemn stipulations, could not without disgrace make a direct attack on the Austrian dominions. Charles, Elector of Bavaria, pretended that he had a right to a large part of the inheritance which the "Pragmatic Sanction" gave to the Queen of Hungary, but he was not sufficiently powerful to move without support. It might, therefore, not unreasonably be expected that after a short period of restlessness, all the potentates of Christendom would acquiesce in the arrangements made by the late emperor. But the selfish rapacity of the King of Prussia gave the signal to his neighbors. His example quieted their sense of shame. His success led them to underrate the difficulty of dismembering the Austrian monarchy. The whole world sprang to arms. On the head of Frederick is all the blood which was shed in a war which raged during many years and in every quarter of the globe—the blood of the column of Fontenoy, the blood of the brave mountaineers who were slaughtered at Culloden. The evils produced by this wickedness were felt in lands where the name of Prussia was unknown; and, in order that he might rob a neighbor whom he had promised to defend, black men fought on the coast of Coromandel, and red men scalped each other by the great lakes of North America.

Silesia had been occupied without a battle; but the Austrian troops were advancing to the relief of the fortresses which still held out. In the spring Frederick rejoined his army. He had seen little of war, *and had never commanded any great body of men*

in the field. It is not, therefore, strange that his first military operations showed little of that skill which, at a later period, was the admiration of Europe. What connoisseurs say of some pictures painted by Raphael in his youth, may be said of this campaign. It was in Frederick's early bad manner. Fortunately for him, the generals to whom he was opposed were men of small capacity. The discipline of his own troops, particularly of the infantry, was unequalled in that age; and some able and experienced officers were at hand to assist him with their advice. Of these, the most distinguished was Field-Marshal Schwerin — a brave adventurer of Pomeranian extraction, who had served half the governments in Europe, had borne the commissions of the States-General of Holland and of the Duke of Mecklenburg, and fought under Marlborough at Blenheim, and had been with Charles the Twelfth at Bender.

Frederick's first battle was fought at Molwitz, and never did the career of a great commander open in a more inauspicious manner. His army was victorious. Not only, however, did he not establish his title to the character of an able general, but he was so unfortunate as to make it doubtful whether he possessed the vulgar courage of a soldier. The cavalry which he commanded in person was put to flight. Unaccustomed to the tumult and carnage of a field of battle, he lost his self-possession, and listened too readily to those who urged him to save himself. His English gray carried him many miles from the field, while Schwerin, though wounded in

two places, manfully upheld the day. The skill of the old Field-Marshal and the steadiness of the Prussian battalions prevailed; and the Austrian army was driven from the field with the loss of eight thousand men.

The news was carried late at night to a mill in which the king had taken shelter. It gave him a bitter pang. He was successful; but he owed his success to dispositions which others had made, and to the valor of men who had fought while he was flying. So unpromising was the first appearance of the greatest warrior of that age!

The battle of Molwitz was the signal for a general explosion throughout Europe. Bavaria took up arms. France, not yet declaring herself a principal in the war, took part in it as an ally of Bavaria. The two great statesmen to whom mankind had owed many years of tranquillity disappeared about this time from the scene; but not till they had both been guilty of the weakness of sacrificing their sense of justice and their love of peace in the vain hope of preserving their power. Fleury, sinking under age and infirmity, was borne down by the impetuosity of Belle-Isle. Walpole retired from the service of his ungrateful country to his woods and paintings at Houghton, and his power devolved on the daring and eccentric Carteret. As were the ministers, so were the nations. Thirty years during which Europe had, with few interruptions, enjoyed repose, had prepared the public mind for great military efforts. A new generation had grown up, which *could not* remember the siege of Turin or the

slaughter of Malplaquet; which knew war by nothing but its trophies; and which, while it looked with pride on the tapestries at Blenheim, or the statue in the "Place of Victories," little thought by what privations, by what waste of private fortunes, by how many bitter tears, conquests must be purchased.

For a time fortune seemed adverse to the Queen of Hungary. Frederick invaded Moravia. The French and Bavarians penetrated into Bohemia, and were there joined by the Saxons. Prague was taken. The Elector of Bavaria was raised by the suffrages of his colleagues to the Imperial throne—a throne which the practice of centuries had almost entitled the house of Austria to regard as an hereditary possession.

Yet was the spirit of the haughty daughter of the Cæsars unbroken. Hungary was still hers by an unquestionable title; and although her ancestors had found Hungary the most mutinous of all their kingdoms, she resolved to trust herself to the fidelity of a people, rude indeed, turbulent, and impatient of oppression, but brave, generous, and simple-hearted. In the midst of distress and peril she had given birth to a son, afterwards the Emperor Joseph the Second. Scarcely had she risen from her couch, when she hastened to Pressburg. There, in the sight of an innumerable multitude, she was crowned with the crown and robed with the robe of St. Stephen. No spectator could refrain his tears when the beautiful young mother, still weak from child-bearing, rode, after the fashion of her fathers, up the Mount of *Dollanes*, unsheathed the ancient sword of state,

shook it towards north and south, east and west and, with a glow on her pale face, challenged the four corners of the world to dispute her rights and those of her boy. At the first sitting of the Diet she appeared clad in deep mourning for her father, and in pathetic and dignified words implored her people to support her just cause. Magnates and deputies sprang up, half drew their sabers, and with eager voices vowed to stand by her with their lives and fortunes. Till then her firmness had never once forsaken her before the public eye, but at that shout she sank down upon her throne, and wept aloud. Still more touching was the sight when, a few days later, she came before the Estates of her realm, and held up before them the little Archduke in her arms. Then it was that the enthusiasm of Hungary broke forth into that war-cry which soon resounded throughout Europe, "Let us die for our King, Maria Theresa!"

In the mean time, Frederick was meditating a change of policy. He had no wish to raise France to supreme power on the continent, at the expense of the house of Hapsburg. His first object was to rob the Queen of Hungary. His second was that, if possible, nobody should rob her but himself. He had entered into engagements with the powers leagued against Austria; but these engagements were in his estimation of no more force than the guaranty formerly given to the "Pragmatic Sanction." His game was now to secure his share of the plunder by betraying his accomplices. Maria Theresa was little inclined to listen to any such compromise; but

the English government represented to her so strongly the necessity of buying off so formidable an enemy as Frederick, that she agreed to negotiate. The negotiation would not, however, have ended in a treaty had not the arms of Frederick been crowned with a second victory. Prince Charles of Lorraine, brother-in-law to Maria Theresa, a bold and active, though unfortunate general, gave battle to the Prussians at Chotusitz, and was defeated. The king was still only a learner of the military art. He acknowledged, at a later period, that his success on this occasion was to be attributed, not at all to his own generalship, but solely to the valor and steadiness of his troops. He completely effaced, however, by his courage and energy, the stain which Molwitz had left on his reputation.

A peace, concluded under the English mediation, was the fruit of this battle. Maria Theresa ceded Silesia; Frederick abandoned his allies; Saxony followed his example; and the queen was left at liberty to turn her whole force against France and Bavaria. She was everywhere triumphant. The French were compelled to evacuate Bohemia, and with difficulty effected their escape. The whole line of their retreat might be tracked by the corpses of thousands who died of cold, fatigue, and hunger. Many of those who reached their country carried with them seeds of death. Bavaria was overrun by bands of ferocious warriors from that bloody "debatable land" which lies on the frontier between Christendom and Islam. The terrible names of the Pandour, the Croat, and the Hussar then first became familiar to western Europe.

The unfortunate Charles of Bavaria, vanquished by Austria, betrayed by Prussia, driven from his hereditary states, and neglected by his allies, was hurried by shame and remorse to an untimely end. An English army appeared in the heart of Germany, and defeated the French at Dettingen. The Austrian captains already began to talk of completing the work of Marlborough and Eugene, and of compelling France to relinquish Alsace and the Three Bishoprics.

The court of Versailles, in this peril, looked to Frederick for help. He had been guilty of two great treasons, perhaps he might be induced to commit a third. The Duchess of Chateauroux then held the chief influence over the feeble Louis. She determined to send an agent to Berlin, and Voltaire was selected for the mission. He eagerly undertook the task; for, while his literary fame filled all Europe, he was troubled with a childish craving for political distinction. He was vain, and not without reason, of his address, and of his insinuating eloquence; and he flattered himself that he possessed boundless influence over the King of Prussia. The truth was that he knew, as yet, only one corner of Frederick's character. He was well acquainted with all the petty vanities and affectations of the poetaster; but was not aware that these foibles were united with all the talents and vices which lead to success in active life; and that the unlucky versifier who bored him with reams of middling Alexandrians, was the most vigilant, suspicious, and severe of politicians.

Voltaire was received with every mark of respect

and friendship, was lodged in the palace, and had a seat daily at the royal table. The negotiation was of an extraordinary description. Nothing can be conceived more whimsical than the conferences which took place between the first literary man and the first practical man of the age, whom a strange weakness had induced to exchange their parts. The great poet would talk of nothing but treaties and guaranties, and the great king of nothing but metaphors and rhymes. On one occasion Voltaire put into his Majesty's hand a paper on the state of Europe, and received it back with verses scrawled on the margin. In secret they both laughed at each other. Voltaire did not spare the king's poems; and the king has left on record his opinion of Voltaire's diplomacy. "He had no credentials," says Frederick, "and the whole mission was a joke, a mere farce."

But what the influence of Voltaire could not effect, the rapid progress of the Austrian arms effected. If it should be in the power of Maria Theresa and George the Second to dictate terms of peace to France, what chance was there that Prussia would long retain Silesia? Frederick's conscience told him that he had acted perfidiously and inhumanly towards the Queen of Hungary. That her resentment was strong she had given ample proof, and of her respect for treaties he judged by his own. Guaranties, he said, were mere filigree, pretty to look at, but too brittle to bear the slightest pressure. He thought it his safest course to ally himself closely to France, and again to attack the Empress Queen. Accordingly, in the autumn of 1744, without notice, with-

out any decent pretext, he recommenced hostilities, marched through the electorate of Saxony without troubling himself about the permission of the Elector, invaded Bohemia, took Prague, and even menaced Vienna.

It was now that, for the first time, he experienced the inconstancy of fortune. An Austrian army under Charles of Lorraine threatened his communications with Silesia. Saxony was all in arms behind him. He found it necessary to save himself by a retreat. He afterwards owned that his failure was the natural effect of his own blunders. No general, he said, had ever committed greater faults. It must be added, that to the reverses of this campaign he always ascribed his subsequent successes.

It was in the midst of difficulty and disgrace that he caught the first clear glimpse of the principles of the military art.

The memorable year of 1745 followed. The war raged by sea and land in Italy, in Germany, and in Flanders; and even England, after many years of profound internal quiet, saw, for the last time, hostile armies set in battle array against each other. This year is memorable in the life of Frederick, as the date at which his novitiate in the art of war may be said to have terminated. There have been great captains whose precocious and self-taught military skill resembled intuition. Condé, Clive, and Napoleon are examples. But Frederick was not one of these brilliant portents. His proficiency in military science was simply the proficiency which a man *vigorous faculties* makes in any science to which

applies his mind with earnestness and industry. It was at Hohenfreidberg that he first proved how much he had profited by his errors and by their consequences. His victory on that day was chiefly due to his skillful dispositions, and convinced Europe that the prince who, a few years before, had stood aghast in the rout of Molwitz, had attained in the military art a mastery equaled by none of his contemporaries, or equaled by Saxe alone. The victory of Hohenfreidberg was speedily followed by that of Sorr.

In the mean time, the arms of France had been victorious in the Low Countries. Frederick had no longer reason to fear that Maria Theresa would be able to give law to Europe, and he began to meditate a fourth breach of his engagements. The court of Versailles was alarmed and mortified. A letter of earnest expostulation, in the handwriting of Louis, was sent to Berlin; but in vain. In the autumn of 1745, Frederick made peace with England, and, before the close of the year, with Austria also. The pretensions of Charles of Bavaria could present no obstacle to an accommodation. That unhappy prince was no more; and Francis of Lorraine, the husband of Maria Theresa, was raised, with the general consent of the Germanic body, to the Imperial throne.

Prussia was again at peace; but the European war lasted till, in the year 1748, it was terminated by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Of all the powers that had taken part in it, the only gainer was Frederick. Not only had he added to his patrimony the fine province of Silesia; he had, by his unprincipled dexterity, succeeded so well in alternately depressing the

scale of Austria and that of France, that he was generally regarded as holding the balance of Europe—a high dignity for one who ranked lowest among kings, and whose great-grandfather had been no more than a margrave. By the public the King of Prussia was considered as a politician destitute alike of morality and decency, insatiably rapacious, and shamelessly false; nor was the public much in the wrong. He was at the same time allowed to be a man of parts—a rising general, a shrewd negotiator and administrator. Those qualities, wherein he surpassed all mankind, were as yet unknown to others or to himself; for they were qualities which shine out only on a dark ground. His career had hitherto, with little interruption, been prosperous; and it was only in adversity, in adversity which seemed without hope or resource, in adversity that would have overwhelmed even men celebrated for strength of mind, that his real greatness could be shown.

He had from the commencement of his reign applied himself to public business after a fashion unknown among kings. Louis XIV., indeed, had been his own prime minister, and had exercised a general superintendence over all the departments of the government; but this was not sufficient for Frederick. He was not content with being his own prime minister—he would be his own sole minister. Under him there was no room, not merely for a Richelieu or a Mazarin, but for a Colbert, a Louvois, or a Torcy. A love of labor for its own sake, a restless and insatiable longing to dictate, to intermeddle, to *make his power felt*, a profound scorn and distrust

of his fellow-creatures, indisposed him to ask counsel, to confide important secrets, to delegate ample powers. The highest functionaries under his government were mere clerks, and were not so much trusted by him as valuable clerks are often trusted by the heads of departments. He was his own treasurer, his own commander-in-chief, his own intendant of public works; his own minister for trade and justice, for home affairs and foreign affairs; his own master of the horse, steward and chamberlain. Matters of which no chief of an office in any other government would ever hear, were, in this singular monarchy, decided by the king in person. If a traveler wished for a good place to see a review, he had to write to Frederick, and receive next day, from a royal messenger, Frederick's answer signed by Frederick's own hand. This was an extravagant, a morbid activity. The public business would assuredly have been better done if each department had been put under a man of talents and integrity, and if the king had contented himself with a general control. In this manner the advantages which belong to unity of design, and the advantages which belong to the division of labor, would have been to a great extent combined. But such a system would not have suited the peculiar temper of Frederick. He could tolerate no will, no reason in the state save his own. He wished for no abler assistance than that of penmen who had just understanding enough to translate, to transcribe, to make out his scrawls, and to put his concise Yes and No into an official form. Of the higher intellectual faculties, there is as much in a

copying machine or a lithographic press as he required from a secretary of the cabinet.

His own exertions were such as were hardly to be expected from a human body or a human mind. At Potsdam, his ordinary residence, he rose at three in summer and four in winter. A page soon appeared, with a large basketful of all the letters which had arrived for the king by the last courier—dispatches from ambassadors, reports from officers of revenue, plans of buildings, proposals for draining marshes, complaints from persons who thought themselves aggrieved, applications from persons who wanted titles, military commissions, and civil situations. He examined the seals with a keen eye; for he was never for a moment free from the suspicion that some fraud might be practiced on him. Then he read the letters, divided them into several packets, and signified his pleasure, generally by a mark, often by two or three words, now and then by some cutting epigram. By eight he had generally finished this part of his task. The adjutant-general was then in attendance, and received instructions for the day as to all the military arrangements of the kingdom. Then the king went to review his guards, not as kings ordinarily review their guards, but with the minute attention and severity of an old drill-sergeant. In the mean time the four cabinet secretaries had been employed in answering the letters on which the king had that morning signified his will. These unhappy men were forced to work all the year round like negro slaves in the time of the sugar-crop. *They never had a holiday. They never knew*

what it was to dine. It was necessary that, before they stirred, they should finish the whole of their work. The king, always on his guard against treachery, took from the heap a handful at random, and looked into them to see whether his instructions had been exactly followed. This was no bad security against foul play on the part of the secretaries; for if one of them were detected in a trick, he might think himself fortunate if he escaped with five years' imprisonment in a dungeon. Frederick then signed the replies, and all were sent off the same evening.

The general principles on which this strange government was conducted deserve attention. The policy of Frederick was essentially the same as his father's; but Frederick, while he carried that policy to lengths to which his father never thought of carrying it, cleared it at the same time from the absurdities with which his father had encumbered it. The king's first object was to have a great, efficient, and well-trained army. He had a kingdom which in extent and population was hardly in the second rank of European powers; and yet he aspired to a place not inferior to that of the sovereigns of England, France, and Austria. For that end it was necessary that Prussia should be all sting. Louis XV., with five times as many subjects as Frederick, and more than five times as large a revenue, had not a more formidable army. The proportion which the soldiers in Prussia bore to the people seems hardly credible. Of the males in the vigor of life, a seventh part were probably under arms; and this great force

had, by drilling, by reviewing, and by the unsparring use of cane and scourge, been taught to perform all evolutions with a rapidity and a precision which would have astonished Villars or Eugene. The elevated feelings which are necessary to the best kind of army were then wanting to the Prussian service. In those ranks were not found the religious and political enthusiasm which inspired the pikemen of Cromwell—the patriotic ardor, the thirst of glory, the devotion to a great leader, which inflamed the Old Guard of Napoleon. But in all the mechanical parts of the military calling, the Prussians were as superior to the English and French troops of that day as the English and French troops to a rustic militia.

Though the pay of the Prussian soldier was small, though every rix dollar of extraordinary charge was scrutinized by Frederick with a vigilance and suspicion such as Mr. Joseph Hume never brought to the examination of an army-estimate, the expense of such an establishment was, for the means of the country, enormous. In order that it might not be utterly ruinous, it was necessary that every other expense should be cut down to the lowest possible point. Accordingly, Frederick, though his dominions bordered on the sea, had no navy. He neither had nor wished to have colonies. His judges, his fiscal officers, were meanly paid. His ministers at foreign courts walked on foot, or drove shabby old carriages till the axletrees gave way. Even to his highest diplomatic agents, who resided at London and Paris, he allowed less than a thousand pounds *sterling* a year. The royal household was managed

with a frugality unusual in the establishments of opulent subjects—unexampled in any other palace. The king loved good eating and drinking, and during great part of his life took pleasure in seeing his table surrounded by guests; yet the whole charge of his kitchen was brought within the sum of two thousand pounds sterling a year. He examined every extraordinary item with a care which might be thought to suit the mistress of a boarding-house better than a great prince. When more than four six dollars were asked of him for a hundred oysters, he stormed as if he had heard that one of his generals had sold a fortress to the Empress-Queen. Not a bottle of champagne was uncorked without his express order. The game of the royal parks and forests, a serious head of expenditure in most kingdoms, was to him a source of profit. The whole was farmed out; and though the farmers were almost ruined by their contract, the king would grant them no remission. His wardrobe consisted of one fine gala dress, which lasted him all his life; of two or three old coats fit for Monmouth street, of yellow waistcoats soiled with snuff, and of huge boots embrowned by time. One taste alone sometimes allured him beyond the limits of parsimony, nay, even beyond the limits of prudence—the taste for building. In all other things his economy was such as we might call by a harsher name, if we did not reflect that his funds were drawn from a heavily taxed people, and that it was impossible for him without excessive tyranny to keep up at once a formidable army and a splendid court.

Considered as an administrator, Frederick had undoubtedly many titles to praise. Order was strictly maintained throughout his dominions. Property was secure. A great liberty of speaking and of writing was allowed. Confident in the irresistible strength derived from a great army, the king looked down on malcontents and libellers with a wise disdain, and gave little encouragement to spies and informers. When he was told of the disaffection of one of his subjects, he merely asked, "How many thousand men can he bring into the field?" He once saw a crowd staring at something on a wall. He rode up, and found that the object of curiosity was a scurrilous placard against himself. The placard had been posted up so high that it was not easy to read it. Frederick ordered his attendants to take it down and put it lower. "My people and I," he said, "have come to an agreement which satisfies us both. They are to say what they please, and I am to do what I please." No person would have dared to publish in London satires on George II. approaching to the atrocity of those satires on Frederick which the booksellers at Berlin sold with impunity. One bookseller sent to the palace a copy of the most stinging lampoon that perhaps was ever written in the world, the "Memoirs of Voltaire," published by Beaumarchais, and asked for his majesty's orders. "Do not advertise it in an offensive manner," said the king; "but sell it by all means. I hope it will pay you well." Even among statesmen accustomed to the license of a free press such steadfastness of *mind as this is not very common.*

It is due also to the memory of Frederick to say that he earnestly labored to secure to his people the great blessing of cheap and speedy justice. He was one of the first rulers who abolished the cruel and absurd practice of torture. No sentence of death pronounced by the ordinary tribunals was executed without his sanction; and his sanction, except in cases of murder, was rarely given. Towards his troops he acted in a very different manner. Military offenses were punished with such barbarous scourging that to be shot was considered by the Prussian soldier as a secondary punishment. Indeed, the principle which pervaded Frederick's whole policy was this—that the more severely the army is governed, the safer it is to treat the rest of the community with lenity.

Religious persecution was unknown under his government—unless some foolish and unjust restrictions which lay upon the Jews may be regarded as forming an exception. His policy with respect to the Catholics of Silesia presented an honorable contrast to the policy which, under very similar circumstances, England long followed with respect to the Catholics of Ireland. Every form of religion and irreligion found an asylum in his states. The scoffer whom the Parliaments of France had sentenced to a cruel death was consoled by a commission in the Prussian service. The Jesuit who could show his face nowhere else—who in Britain was still subject to penal laws, who was proscribed by France, Spain, Portugal, and Naples, who had been given up even

by the Vatican—found safety and the means of subsistence in the Prussian dominions.

Most of the vices of Frederick's administration resolve themselves into one vice—the spirit of meddling. The indefatigable activity of his intellect, his dictatorial temper, his military habits, all inclined him to this great fault. He drilled his people as he drilled his grenadiers. Capital and industry were diverted from their natural direction by a crowd of preposterous regulations. There was a monopoly of coffee, a monopoly of tobacco, a monopoly of refined sugar. The public money, of which the king was generally so sparing, was lavishly spent in plowing bogs, in planting mulberry-trees amidst the sand, in bringing sheep from Spain to improve the Saxon wool, in bestowing prizes for fine yarn, in building manufactories of porcelain, manufactories of carpets, manufactories of hardware, manufactories of lace. Neither the experience of other rulers nor his own could ever teach him that something more than an edict and a grant of public money is required to create a Lyons, a Brussels, or a Birmingham.

For his commercial policy, however, there is some excuse. He had on his side illustrious examples and popular prejudice. Grievously as he erred, he erred in company with his age. In other departments his meddling was altogether without apology. He interfered with the course of justice as well as with the course of trade, and set up his own crude notions of equity against the law as expounded by the *UNANIMOUS* voice of the gravest magistrates. It

never occurred to him that a body of men whose lives were passed in adjudicating on questions of civil right, were more likely to form correct opinions on such questions than a prince whose attention was divided between a thousand objects, and who had probably never read a law-book through. The resistance opposed to him by the tribunals inflamed him to fury. He reviled his Chancellor. He kicked the shins of his Judges. He did not, it is true, intend to act unjustly. He firmly believed that he was doing right and defending the cause of the poor against the wealthy. Yet this well-meant meddling probably did far more harm than all the explosions of his evil passions during the whole of his long reign. We could make shift to live under a debauchee or a tyrant, but to be ruled by a busybody is more than human nature can bear.

The same passion for directing and regulating appeared in every part of the king's policy. Every lad of a certain station in life was forced to go to certain schools within the Prussian dominions. If a young Prussian repaired, though but for a few weeks, to Leyden or Göttingen for the purpose of study, the offense was punished with civil disabilities, and sometimes with confiscation of property. Nobody was to travel without the royal permission. If the permission were granted, the pocket-money of the tourist was fixed by royal ordinances. A merchant might take with him two hundred and fifty rix dollars in gold, a noble was allowed to take four hundred; for it may be observed, in passing, that *Frederick* studiously kept up the old distinction

between the nobles and the community. In speculation he was a French philosopher, but in action a German prince. He talked and wrote about the privileges of blood in the style of Siéyes; but in practice no chapter in the empire looked with a keener eye to genealogies and quarterings.

Such was Frederick the ruler. But there was another Frederick, the Frederick of Rheinsberg, the fiddler and flute-player, the poetaster and metaphysician. Amidst the cares of state the king had retained his passion for music, for reading, for writing, for literary society. To these amusements he devoted all the time he could snatch from the business of war and government; and perhaps more light is thrown on his character by what passed during his hours of relaxation than by his battles or his laws.

It was the just boast of Schiller, that in his country no Augustus, no Lorenzo, had watched over the infancy of art. The rich and energetic language of Luther, driven by the Latin from the schools of pedants, and by the French from the palaces of kings, had taken refuge among the people. Of the powers of that language Frederick had no notion. He generally spoke of it, and of those who used it, with the contempt of ignorance. His library consisted of French books; at his table nothing was heard but French conversation.

The associates of his hours of relaxation were, for the most part, foreigners. Britain furnished to the royal circle two distinguished men, born in the highest rank, and driven by civil dissensions from

the land to which, under happier circumstances, their talents and virtues might have been a source of strength and glory. George Keith, Earl Marischal of Scotland, had taken arms for the house of Stuart in 1715, and his younger brother James, then only seventeen years old, had fought gallantly by his side. When all was lost they retired to the continent, roved from country to country, served under many standards, and so bore themselves as to win the respect and good-will of many who had no love for the Jacobite cause. Their long wanderings terminated at Potsdam; nor had Frederick any associates who deserved or obtained so large a share of his esteem. They were not only accomplished men, but nobles and warriors, capable of serving him in war and diplomacy, as well as of amusing him at supper. Alone of all his companions, they appear never to have had reason to complain of his demeanor towards them. Some of those who knew the palace best pronounced that the Lord Marischal was the only human being whom Frederick ever really loved.

Italy sent to the parties at Potsdam the ingenious and amiable Algarotti and Bastiani, the most crafty, cautious, and servile of Abbés. But the greater part of the society which Frederick had assembled round him was drawn from France. Maupertuis had acquired some celebrity by the journey which he made to Lapland, for the purpose of ascertaining by actual measurement the shape of our planet. He was placed in the chair of the Academy of Berlin, a humble imitation of the renowned Academy of

Paris. Baculard D'Arnaud, a young poet, who was thought to have given promise of great things, had been induced to quit the country and to reside at the Prussian court. The Marquess D'Argens was among the king's favorite companions, on account, as it would seem, of the strong opposition between their characters. The parts of D'Argens were good and his manners those of a finished French gentleman; but his whole soul was dissolved in sloth, timidity, and self-indulgence. His was one of that abject class of minds which are superstitious without being religious. Hating Christianity with a rancor which made him incapable of rational inquiry, unable to see in the harmony and beauty of the universe the traces of divine power and wisdom, he was the slave of dreams and omens—would not sit down to the table with thirteen in company, turned pale if the salt fell towards him, begged his guests not to cross their knives and forks on their plates, and would not for the world commence a journey on Friday. His health was a subject of constant anxiety to him. Whenever his head ached or his pulse beat quick, his dastardly fears and effeminate precautions were the jest of all Berlin. All this suited the king's purpose admirably. He wanted somebody by whom he might be amused, and whom he might despise. When he wished to pass half an hour in easy, polished conversation, D'Argens was an excellent companion; when he wanted to vent his spleen and contempt, D'Argens was an excellent butt. With these associates and *others of the same class*, Frederick loved to spend

the time which he could steal from public cares. He wished his supper-parties to be gay and easy; and invited his guests to lay aside all restraint, and to forget that he was at the head of a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers, and was absolute master of the life and liberty of all who sat at meat with him. There was therefore at these meetings the outward show of ease. The wit and learning of the company were ostentatiously displayed. The discussions on history and literature were often highly interesting. But the absurdity of all the religions known among men was the chief topic of conversation; and the audacity with which doctrines and names venerated throughout Christendom were treated on these occasions, startled even persons accustomed to the society of French and English free-thinkers. But real liberty or real affection was in this brilliant society not to be found. Absolute kings seldom have friends: and Frederick's faults were such as, even where perfect equality exists, make friendship exceedingly precarious. He had, indeed, many qualities which on the first acquaintance were captivating. His conversation was lively, his manners to those whom he desired to please were even caressing. No man could flatter with more delicacy. No man succeeded more completely in inspiring those who approached him with vague hopes of some great advantage from his kindness. But under this fair exterior he was a tyrant—suspicious, disdainful, and malevolent. He had one taste which may be pardoned in a boy, but which, when habitually and deliberately indulged in a man

of mature age and strong understanding, is almost invariably the sign of a bad heart—a taste for severe practical jokes. If a friend of the king was fond of dress, oil was flung over his richest suit. If he was fond of money, some prank was invented to make him disburse more than he could spare. If he was hypochondriacal, he was made to believe he had the dropsy. If he particularly set his heart on visiting a place, a letter was forged to frighten him from going thither. These things, it may be said, are trifles. They are so; but they are indications not to be mistaken of a nature to which the sight of human suffering and human degradation is an agreeable excitement.

Frederick had a keen eye for the foibles of others, and loved to communicate his discoveries. He had some talent for sarcasm, and considerable skill in detecting the sore places where sarcasm would be most actually felt. His vanity, as well as his malignity, found gratification in the vexation and confusion of those who smarted under his caustic jests. Yet in truth his success on these occasions belonged quite as much to the king as to the wit. We read that Commodus descended, sword in hand, into the arena against a wretched gladiator, armed only with a foil of lead, and, after shedding the blood of the helpless victim, struck medals to commemorate the inglorious victory. The triumphs of Frederick in the war of repartee were much of the same kind. How to deal with him was the most puzzling of questions. To appear constrained in his presence was to disobey his commands and to spoil his

amusement. Yet if his associates were enticed by his graciousness to indulge in the familiarity of a cordial intimacy, he was certain to make them repent of their presumption by some cruel humiliation. To resent his affronts was perilous: yet not to resent them was to deserve and to invite them. In his view, those who mutinied were insolent and ungrateful; those who submitted were curs made to receive bones and kickings with the same fawning patience. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive how anything short of the rage of hunger should have induced men to bear the misery of being the associates of the Great King. It was no lucrative post. His Majesty was as severe and economical in his friendships as in the other charges of his establishment, and as unlikely to give a rix dollar too much for his guests as for his dinners. The sum which he allowed to a poet or a philosopher was the very smallest sum for which such poet or philosopher could be induced to sell himself into slavery; and the bondsman might think himself fortunate if what had been so grudgingly given was not, after years of suffering, rudely and arbitrarily withdrawn.

Potsdam was, in truth, what it was called by one of its most illustrious inmates, the Palace of Alcina. At the first glance it seemed to be a delightful spot, where every intellectual and physical enjoyment awaited the happy adventurer. Every new-comer was received with eager hospitality, intoxicated with flattery, encouraged to expect prosperity and greatness. It was in vain that a long

succession of favorites who had entered that abode with delight and hope, and who, after a short term of delusive happiness, had been doomed to expiate their folly by years of wretchedness and degradation, raised their voices to warn the aspirant who approached the charmed threshold. Some had wisdom enough to discover the truth early and spirit enough to fly without looking back; others lingered on to a cheerless and unhonored old age. We have no hesitation in saying that the poorest author of that time in London, sleeping on a bulk, dining in a cellar, with a cravat of paper, and a skewer for a shirt-pin, was a happier man than any of the literary inmates of Frederick's court.

But of all who entered the enchanted garden in the inebriation of delight, and quitted it in agonies of rage and shame, the most remarkable was Voltaire. Many circumstances had made him desirous of finding a home at a distance from his country. His fame had raised him up enemies. His sensibility gave them a formidable advantage over him. They were, indeed, contemptible assailants. Of all that they wrote against him, nothing has survived except what he has himself preserved. But the constitution of his mind resembled the constitution of those bodies in which the slightest scratch of a bramble or the bite of a gnat never fails to fester. Though his reputation was rather raised than lowered by the abuse of such writers as Fréron and Desfontaines—though the vengeance which he took on Fréron and Desfontaines was such that scourging, branding, pillorying, would have been a trifle

to it—there is reason to believe that they gave him far more pain than he ever gave them. Though he enjoyed during his own lifetime the reputation of a classic—though he was extolled by his contemporaries above all poets, philosophers, and historians—though his works were read with much delight and admiration at Moscow and Westminster, at Florence and Stockholm, as at Paris itself, he was yet tormented by that restless jealousy which should seem to belong only to minds burning with the desire of fame, and yet conscious of impotence. To men of letters who could by no possibility be his rivals, he was, if they behaved well to him, not merely just, not merely courteous, but often a hearty friend and a munificent benefactor. But to every writer who rose to a celebrity approaching his own, he became either a disguised or an avowed enemy. He slyly depreciated Montesquieu and Buffon. He publicly and with violent outrage made war on Jean Jacques. Nor had he the art of hiding his feelings under the semblance of good-humor or of contempt. With all his great talents and all his long experience of the world, he had no more self-command than a petted child or an hysterical woman. Whenever he was mortified he exhausted the whole rhetoric of anger and sorrow to express his mortification. His torrents of bitter words—his stamping and cursing—his grimaces and his tears of rage—were a rich feast to those abject natures whose delight is in the agonies of powerful spirits and in the abasement of immortal names. These creatures had now found out a way of galling him to the very quick. In one

walk, at least, it had been admitted by envy itself that he was without a living competitor. Since Racine had been laid among the great men whose dust made the holy precinct of Port Royal holier, no tragic poet had appeared who could contest the palm with the author of *Zaire*, of *Alzire*, and of *Merope*. At length a rival was announced. Old Crébillon, who many years before had obtained some theatrical success, and who had long been forgotten, came forth from his garret in one of the meanest lanes near the Rue St. Antoine, and was welcomed by the acclamations of envious men of letters and of a capricious populace. A thing called *Catiline*, which he had written in his retirement, was acted with boundless applause. Of this execrable piece it is sufficient to say that the plot turns on a love affair, carried on in all the forms of Scudery, between Catiline, whose confidant is the Prætor Lentulus, and Tullia, the daughter of Cicero. The theater resounded with acclamations. The king pensioned the successful poet; and the coffee-houses pronounced that Voltaire was a clever man, but that the real tragic inspiration, the celestial fire which glowed in Corneille and Racine, was to be found in Crébillon alone.

The blow went to Voltaire's heart. Had his wisdom and fortitude been in proportion to the fertility of his intellect, and to the brilliancy of his wit, he would have seen that it was out of the power of all the puffers and detractors in Europe to put *Catiline* above *Zaire*; but he had none of the magnanimous *patience* with which Milton and Bentley left their

claims to the unerring judgment of time. He eagerly engaged in an undignified competition with Crébillon, and produced a series of plays on the same subjects which his rival had treated. These pieces were coolly received. Angry with the court, angry with the capital, Voltaire began to find pleasure in the prospect of exile. His attachment for Madame de Châtelet long prevented him from executing his purpose. Her death set him at liberty, and he determined to take refuge at Berlin.

To Berlin he was invited by a series of letters, couched in terms of the most enthusiastic friendship and admiration. For once the rigid parsimony of Frederick seemed to have relaxed. Orders, honorable offices, a liberal pension, a well-served table, stately apartments under a royal roof, were offered in return for the pleasure and honor which were expected from the society of the first wit of the age. A thousand louis were remitted for the charges of the journey. No ambassador setting out from Berlin for a court of the first rank had ever been more amply supplied. But Voltaire was not satisfied. At a later period, when he possessed an ample fortune, he was one of the most liberal of men; but till his means had become equal to his wishes, his greediness for lucre was unrestrained either by justice or by shame. He had the effrontery to ask for a thousand louis more, in order to enable him to bring his niece, Madame Denis, the ugliest of coquettes, in his company. The indelicate rapacity of the poet produced its natural effect on the severe and frugal king. The answer was a dry refusal. "I did not," said the

Majesty, "solicit the honor of the lady's society." On this Voltaire went off into a paroxysm of childish rage. "Was there ever such avarice? He has a hundred of tubs full of dollars in his vaults, and haggles with me about a poor thousand louis." It seemed that the negotiation would be broken off; but Frederick, with great dexterity, affected indifference, and seemed inclined to transfer his idolatry to Baculard d'Arnaud. His Majesty even wrote some bad verses, of which the sense was, that Voltaire was a setting sun, and that Arnaud was rising. Good-natured friends soon carried the lines to Voltaire. He was in his bed. He jumped out in his shirt, danced about the room with rage, and sent for his passport and his post-horses. It was not difficult to foresee the end of a connection which had such a beginning.

It was in the year 1750 that Voltaire left the great capital, which he was not to see again till, after the lapse of nearly thirty years, he returned, bowed down by extreme old age, to die in the midst of a splendid and ghastly triumph. His reception in Prussia was such as might well have elated a less vain and excitable mind. He wrote to his friends at Paris that the kindness and the attention with which he had been welcomed surpassed description—that the king was the most amiable of men—that Potsdam was the Paradise of philosophers. He was created chamberlain, and received, together with his gold key, the cross of an order and a patent insuring to him a pension of eight hundred pounds sterling a year for life. A hundred and sixty pounds a year

were promised to his niece if she survived him. The royal cooks and coachmen were put at his disposal. He was lodged in the same apartments in which Saxe had lived when, at the height of power and glory, he visited Prussia. Frederick, indeed, stooped for a time even to use the language of adulation. He pressed to his lips the meager hand of the little grinning skeleton, whom he regarded as the dispenser of immortal renown. He would add, he said, to the titles which he owed to his ancestors and his sword, another title derived from his last and proudest acquisition. His style should run thus: Frederick, King of Prussia, Margrave of Brandenburg, Sovereign Duke of Silesia, Possessor of Voltaire. But even amidst the delights of the honeymoon, Voltaire's sensitive vanity began to take alarm. A few days after his arrival he could not help telling his niece that the amiable king had a trick of giving a sly scratch with one hand while patting and stroking with the other. Soon came hints not the less alarming because mysterious. "The supper parties are delicious. The king is the life of the company. But—I have operas and comedies, reviews and concerts, my studies and books. But—but—Berlin is fine, the princess charming, the maids of honor handsome. But——"

This eccentric friendship was fast cooling. Never had there met two persons so exquisitely fitted to plague each other. Each of them had exactly the fault of which the other was most impatient; and they were, in different ways, the most impatient of mankind. Frederick was frugal, almost niggardly.

When he had secured his plaything he began to think that he had bought it too dear. Voltaire, on the other hand, was greedy, even to the extent of impudence and knavery; and conceived that the favorite of a monarch who had barrels full of gold and silver laid up in cellars ought to make a fortune which a receiver-general might envy. They soon discovered each other's feelings. Both were angry, and a war began, in which Frederick stooped to the part of Harpagon, and Voltaire to that of Scapin. It is humiliating to relate that the great warrior and statesman gave orders that his guest's allowance of sugar and chocolate should be curtailed. It is, if possible, a still more humiliating fact that Voltaire indemnified himself by pocketing the wax candles in the royal antechamber. Disputes about money, however, were not the most serious disputes of these extraordinary associates. The sarcasm soon galled the sensitive temper of the poet. D'Arnaud and D'Argens, Guichard and La Métrie, might, for the sake of a morsel of bread, be willing to bear the insolence of a master; but Voltaire was of another order. He knew that he was a potentate as well as Frederick; that his European reputation, and his incomparable power of covering whatever he hated with ridicule, made him an object of dread even to the leaders of armies and the rulers of nations. In truth, of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire. Bigots and tyrants, who had never been moved by the wailing and cursing of millions, turned pale at his name. Principles unas-

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ailable by reason—principles which had withstood the fiercest attacks of power, the most valuable truths, the most generous sentiments, the noblest and most graceful images, the purest reputations, the most august institutions—began to look mean and loathsome as soon as that withering smile was turned upon them. To every opponent, however strong in his cause and his talents, in his station and his character, who ventured to encounter the great scoffer, might be addressed the caution which was given of old to the Archangel:—

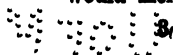
“ I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though temper'd heavenly; for that fatal dint,
Save Him who reigns above, none can resist.”

We cannot pause to recount how often that rare talent was exercised against rivals worthy of esteem—how often it was used to crush and torture enemies worthy only of silent disdain—how often it was perverted to the more noxious purpose of destroying the last solace of earthly misery and the last restraint on earthly power. Neither can we pause to tell how often it was used to vindicate justice, humanity, and toleration—the principles of sound philosophy, the principles of free government. This is not the place for a full character of Voltaire.

Causes of quarrel multiplied fast. Voltaire, who, partly from love of money and partly from love of excitement, was always fond of stockjobbing, became implicated in transactions of at least a dubious

character. The king was delighted at having such an opportunity to humble his guest; and bitter reproaches and complaints were exchanged. Voltaire, too, was soon at war with the other men of letters who surrounded the king; and this irritated Frederick, who, however, had himself chiefly to blame, for, from that love of tormenting which was in him a ruling passion, he perpetually lavished extravagant praises on small men and bad books, merely in order that he might enjoy the mortification and rage which on such occasions Voltaire took no pains to conceal. His Majesty, however, soon had reason to regret the pains which he had taken to kindle jealousy among the members of his household. The whole palace was in a ferment with literary intrigues and cabals. It was to no purpose that the imperial voice, which kept a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers in order, was raised to quiet the contention of the exasperated wits. It was far easier to stir up such a storm than to lull it. Nor was Frederick, in his capacity of wit, by any means without his own share of vexations. He had sent a large quantity of verses to Voltaire, and requested that they might be returned with remarks and correction. "See," exclaimed Voltaire, "what a quantity of his dirty linen the king has sent me to wash!" Talebearers were not wanting to carry the sarcasm to the royal ear, and Frederick was as much incensed as a Grub Street writer who had found his name in the "Dunciad."

This could not last. A circumstance which, when the mutual regard of the friends was in its first glow, would merely have been matter for laughter, pro-



duced a violent explosion. Maupertuis enjoyed as much of Frederick's good-will as any man of letters. He was President of the Academy of Berlin, and stood second to Voltaire, though at an immense distance, in the literary society which had been assembled at the Prussian court. Frederick had, by playing for his own amusement on the feelings of the two jealous and vainglorious Frenchmen, succeeded in producing a bitter enmity between them. Voltaire resolved to set his mark—a mark never to be effaced—on the forehead of Maupertuis; and wrote the exquisitely ludicrous diatribe of *Doctor Akakia*. He showed this little piece to Frederick, who had too much taste and too much malice not to relish such delicious pleasantry. In truth, even at this time of day, it is not easy for any person who has the least perception of the ridiculous to read the jokes on the Latin city, the Patagonians, and the hole to the center of the earth, without laughing till he cries. But though Frederick was diverted by this charming pasquinade, he was unwilling that it should get abroad. His self-love was interested. He had selected Maupertuis to fill the Chair of his Academy. If all Europe were taught to laugh at Maupertuis, would not the reputation of the Academy, would not even the dignity of its royal patron be in some degree compromised? The king, therefore, begged Voltaire to suppress his performance. Voltaire promised to do so, and broke his word. The diatribe was published, and received with shouts of merriment and applause by all who could read the French language. The king stormed; Voltaire,

with his usual disregard of truth, protested his innocence, and made up some lie about a printer or an amanuensis. The king was not to be so imposed upon. He ordered the pamphlet to be burned by the common hangman, and insisted upon having an apology from Voltaire, couched in the most abject terms. Voltaire sent back to the king his cross, his key, and the patent of his pension. After this burst of rage, the strange pair began to be ashamed of their violence, and went through the forms of reconciliation. But the breach was irreparable, and Voltaire took his leave of Frederick forever. They parted with cold civility; but their hearts were big with resentment. Voltaire had in his keeping a volume of the king's poetry and forgot to return it. This was, we believe, merely one of the oversights which men setting out upon a journey often commit. That Voltaire could have meditated plagiarism is quite incredible. He would not, we are confident, for the half of Frederick's kingdom have consented to father Frederick's verses. The king, however, who rated his own writings much above their value, and who was inclined to see all Voltaire's actions in the worst light, was enraged to think that his favorite compositions were in the hands of an enemy as thievish as a daw and as mischievous as a monkey. In the anger excited by this thought, he lost sight of reason and decency, and determined on committing an outrage at once odious and ridiculous.

Voltaire had reached Frankfort. His niece, Madame Denis, came thither to meet him. He conceived himself secure from the power of his late master,

when he was arrested by order of the Prussian resident. The precious volume was delivered up. But the Prussian agents had no doubt been instructed not to let Voltaire escape without some gross indignity. He was confined twelve days in a wretched hovel. Sentinels with fixed bayonets kept guard over him. His niece was dragged through the mire by the soldiers. Sixteen hundred dollars were extorted from him by his insolent jailors. It is absurd to say that this outrage is not to be attributed to the king. Was anybody punished for it? Was anybody called in question for it? Was it not consistent with Frederick's character? Was it not of a piece with his conduct on other similar occasions? Is it not notorious that he repeatedly gave private directions to his officers to pillage and demolish the houses of persons against whom he had a grudge—charging them at the same time to take their measure in such a way that his name might not be compromised? He acted thus towards Count Buhl in the Seven Years' War. Why should we believe that he would have been more scrupulous with regard to Voltaire?

When at length the illustrious prisoner regained his liberty, the prospect before him was but dreary. He was an exile both from the country of his birth and from the country of his adoption. The French government had taken offense at his journey to Prussia, and would not permit him to return to Paris; and in the vicinity of Prussia it was not safe for him to remain.

He took refuge on the beautiful shores of Lake Lemman. There, loosed from every tie which had

hitherto restrained him, and having little to hope or to fear from courts and churches, he began his long war against all that, whether for good or evil, had authority over man; for what Burke said of the Constituent Assembly was eminently true of this its great forerunner. He could not build—he could only pull down; he was the very Vitruvius of ruin. He has bequeathed to us not a single doctrine to be called by his name, not a single addition to the stock of our positive knowledge. But no human teacher ever left behind him so vast and terrible a wreck of truths and falsehoods—of things noble and things base—of things useful and things pernicious. From the time when his sojourn beneath the Alps commenced, the dramatist, the wit, the historian, was merged in a more important character. He was now the patriarch, the founder of a sect, the chief of a conspiracy, the prince of a wide intellectual commonwealth. He often enjoyed a pleasure dear to the better part of his nature—the pleasure of vindicating innocence which had no other helper, of repairing cruel wrongs, of punishing tyranny in high places. He had also the satisfaction, not less acceptable to his ravenous vanity, of hearing terrified Capuchins call him the Antichrist. But whether employed in works of benevolence or in works of mischief, he never forgot Potsdam and Frankfort; and he listened anxiously to every murmur which indicated that a tempest was gathering in Europe, and that his vengeance was at hand.

He soon had his wish. Maria Theresa had never for a moment forgotten the great wrong which she

had received at the hand of Frederick. Young and delicate, just left an orphan, just about to be a mother, she had been compelled to fly from the ancient capital of her race; she had seen her fair inheritance dismembered by robbers, and of those robbers he had been the foremost. Without a pretext, without a provocation, in defiance of the most sacred engagements, he had attacked the helpless ally whom he was bound to defend. The Empress-Queen had the faults as well as the virtues which are connected with quick sensibility and a high spirit. There was no peril which she was not ready to brave, no calamity which she was not ready to bring on her subjects, or on the whole human race, if only she might once taste the sweetness of a complete revenge. Revenge, too, presented itself to her narrow and superstitious mind in the guise of duty. Silesia had been wrested not only from the house of Austria, but from the Church of Rome.

The conqueror had, indeed, permitted his new subjects to worship God after their own fashion; but this was not enough. To bigotry it seemed an intolerable hardship that the Catholic Church, having long enjoyed ascendancy, should be compelled to content itself with equality. Nor was this the only circumstance which led Maria Theresa to regard her enemy as the enemy of God. The profaneness of Frederick's writings and conversation, and the frightful rumors which were circulated respecting the immoralities of his private life, naturally shocked a woman who believed with the firmest faith all that her confessor told her, and who, though surrounded

by temptations, though young and beautiful, though ardent in all her passions, though possessed of absolute power, had preserved her fame unsullied even by the breath of slander.

To recover Silesia, to humble the dynasty of Hohenzollern to the dust, was the great object of her life. She toiled during many years for this end, with zeal as indefatigable as that which the poet ascribes to the stately goddess who tired out her immortal horses in the work of raising the nations against Troy, and who offered to give up to destruction her darling Sparta and Mycenæ, if only she might once see the smoke going up from the palace of Priam. With even such a spirit did the proud Austrian Juno strive to array against her foe a coalition such as Europe had never seen. Nothing would content her but that the whole civilized world, from the White Sea to the Adriatic, from the Bay of Biscay to the pastures of the wild horses of Tanais, should be combined in arms against one petty state.

She early succeeded by various arts in obtaining the adhesion of Russia. An ample share of spoils was promised to the King of Poland; and that prince, governed by his favorite, Count Buhl, readily promised the assistance of the Saxon forces. The great difficulty was with France. That the houses of Bourbon and of Hapsburg should ever cordially cooperate in any great scheme of European policy had long been thought, to use the strong expression of Frederick, just as impossible as that fire and water should amalgamate. The whole history of the Con-

continent, during two centuries and a half, had been the history of the mutual jealousies and enmities of France and Austria. Since the administration of Richelieu, above all, it had been considered as the plain policy of the Most Christian king to thwart on all occasions the court of Vienna, and to protect every member of the Germanic body who stood up against the dictation of the Cæsars. Common sentiments of religion had been unable to mitigate this strong antipathy. The rulers of France, even while clothed in the Roman purple, even while persecuting the heretics of Rochelle and Auvergne, had still looked with favor on the Lutheran and Calvinistic princes who were struggling against the chief of the empire. If the French ministers paid any respect to the traditional rules handed down to them through many generations, they would have acted towards Frederick as the greatest of their predecessors acted towards Gustavus Adolphus. That there was deadly enmity between Prussia and Austria, was of itself a sufficient reason for close friendship between Prussia and France. With France, Frederick could never have any serious controversy. His territories were so situated, that his ambition, greedy and unscrupulous as it was, could never impel him to attack her of his own accord. He was more than half a Frenchman. He wrote, spoke, read nothing but French; he delighted in French society. The admiration of the French he proposed to himself as the best reward of all his exploits. It seemed incredible that any French government, however notorious for levity or stupidity, could spurn away such an ally.

The court of Vienna, however, did not despair. The Austrian diplomatists propounded a new scheme of politics, which, it must be owned, was not altogether without plausibility. The great powers, according to this theory, had long been under a delusion. They had looked on each other as natural enemies, while in truth they were natural allies. A succession of cruel wars had devastated Europe, had thinned the population, had exhausted the public resources, had loaded governments with an immense burden of debt; and when, after two hundred years of murderous hostility or of hollow truce, the illustrious houses whose enmity had distracted the world sat down to count their gains, to what did the real advantage on either side amount? Simply to this, that they kept each other from thriving. It was not the King of France, it was not the Emperor, who had reaped the fruits of the Thirty Years' War, of the War of the Grand Alliance, of the War of the Pragmatic Sanction. Those fruits have been pilfered by States of the second and third rank, which, secured against jealousy by their insignificance, had dexterously aggrandized themselves while pretending to serve the animosity of the great chiefs of Christendom. While the lion and tiger were tearing each other, the jackal had run off into the jungle with the prey. The real gainer by the Thirty Years' War had been neither France nor Austria, but Sweden. The real gainer by the War of the Grand Alliance had been neither France nor Austria, but Savoy. The real gainer by the War of the Pragmatic Sanction had been neither France nor Austria, but the upstart

of Brandenburg. Of all these instances, the last was the most striking. France had made great efforts, had added largely to her military glory and largely to her public burdens; and for what end? Merely that Frederick might rule Silesia. For this, and this alone, one French army, wasted by sword and famine, had perished in Bohemia; and another had purchased, with floods of the noblest blood, the barren glory of Fontenoy. And this prince, for whom France had suffered so much, was he a grateful, was he even an honest ally? Had he not been as false to the court of Versailles as to the court of Vienna? Had he not played on a large scale the same part which, in private life, is played by the vile agent of chicane who sets his neighbors quarreling, involves them in costly and interminable litigation, and betrays them to each other all round, certain that, whoever may be ruined, he shall be enriched? Surely the true wisdom of the great powers was to attack, not each other, but this common barrator, who, by inflaming the passions of both, by pretending to serve both, and by deserting both, had raised himself above the station to which he was born. The great object of Austria was to regain Silesia; the great object of France was to obtain an accession of territory on the side of Flanders. If they took opposite sides, the result would probably be that, after a war of many years, after the slaughter of many thousands of brave men, after the waste of many millions of crowns, they would lay down their arms without having achieved either object; but if they came to an understanding, there would be no

risk and no difficulty. Austria would willingly make in Belgium such cessions as France could not expect to obtain by ten pitched battles. Silesia would easily be annexed to the monarchy of which it had long been a part. The union of two such powerful governments would at once overawe the King of Prussia. If he resisted, one short campaign would settle his fate. France and Austria, long accustomed to rise from the game of war both losers, would, for the first time, both be gainers. There could be no room for jealousy between them. The power of both would be increased at once; the equilibrium between them would be preserved; and the only sufferer would be a mischievous and unprincipled buccaneer, who deserved no tenderness from either.

These doctrines, attractive from their novelty and ingenuity, soon became fashionable at the supper-parties and in the coffee-houses of Paris, and were espoused by every gay marquis and every facetious abbé who was admitted to see Madame de Pompadour's hair curled and powdered. It was not, however, to any political theory that the strange coalition between France and Austria owed its origin. The real motive which induced the great continental powers to forget their old animosities and their old state maxims, was personal aversion to the King of Prussia. This feeling was strongest in Maria Theresa; but it was by no means confined to her. Frederick, in some respects a good master, was emphatically a bad neighbor. That he was hard in all his dealings and quick to take all advantages was not his most odious fault. His bitter and scoffing

speech had inflicted keener wounds than his ambition. In his character of wit he was under less restraint than even in his character of ruler. Satirical verses against all the princes and ministers of Europe were ascribed to his pen. In his letters and conversation he alluded to the greatest potentates of the age in terms which would have better suited Collé, in a war of repartee with young Crébillon at Pelletier's table, than a great sovereign speaking of great sovereigns. About women he was in the habit of expressing himself in a manner which it was impossible for the meekest of women to forgive; and, unfortunately for him, almost the whole continent was then governed by women who were by no means conspicuous for meekness. Maria Theresa herself had not escaped his scurrilous jests; the Empress Elizabeth of Russia knew that her gallantries afforded him a favorite theme for ribaldry and invective; Madame de Pompadour, who was really the head of the French government, had been even more keenly galled. She had attempted, by the most delicate flattery, to propitiate the King of Prussia, but her messages had drawn from him only dry and sarcastic replies. The Empress-Queen took a very different course. Though the haughtiest of princesses, though the most austere of matrons, she forgot in her thirst for revenge both the dignity of her race and the purity of her character, and condescended to flatter the low-born and low-minded concubine, who, having acquired influence by prostituting herself, retained it by prostituting others. Maria Theresa actually wrote with her own hand a note full of ex-

pressions of esteem and friendship to her dear cousin, the daughter of the butcher Poisson, the wife of the publican D'Etioles, the kidnapper of young girls for the *Parc-aux-cerfs*—a strange cousin for the descendant of so many Emperors of the West! The mistress was completely gained over and easily carried her point with Louis, who had, indeed, wrongs of his own to resent. His feelings were not quick; but contempt, says the eastern proverb, pierces even through the shell of the tortoise: and neither prudence nor decorum had ever restrained Frederick from expressing his measureless contempt for the sloth, the imbecility, and the baseness of Louis. France was thus induced to join the coalition; and the example of France determined the conduct of Sweden, then completely subject to French influence.

The enemies of Frederick were surely strong enough to attack him openly, but they were desirous to add to all their other advantages the advantage of a surprise. He was not, however, a man to be taken off his guard. He had tools in every court; and he now received from Vienna, from Dresden, and from Paris, accounts so circumstantial and so consistent, that he could not doubt of his danger. He learnt that he was to be assailed at once by France, Austria, Russia, Saxony, Sweden, and the Germanic body; that the greater part of his dominions was to be portioned out among his enemies; that France, which from her geographical position could not directly share in his spoils, was to receive an equivalent in the Netherlands; that Austria was to have Silesia, and the czarina East Prussia; that Augustus of Sax-

ony expected Magdeburg; and that Sweden would be rewarded with part of Pomerania. If these designs succeeded, the house of Brandenburg would at once sink in the European system to a place lower than that of the Duke of Wurtemberg or the Margrave of Baden.

And what hope was there that these designs would fail? No such union of the continental powers had been seen for ages. A less formidable confederacy had in a week conquered all the provinces of Venice, when Venice was at the height of power, wealth, and glory. A less formidable confederacy had compelled Louis the Fourteenth to bow down his haughty head to the very earth. A less formidable confederacy has, within our own memory, subjugated a still mightier empire and abased a still prouder name. Such odds had never been heard of in war. The people whom Frederick ruled were not five millions. The population of the countries which were leagued against him amounted to a hundred millions. The disproportion in wealth was at least equally great. Small communities, actuated by strong sentiments of patriotism or loyalty, have sometimes made head against great monarchies weakened by factions and discontents. But small as was Frederick's kingdom, it probably contained a greater number of disaffected subjects than were to be found in all the States of his enemies. Silesia formed a fourth part of his dominions; and from the Silesians, born under the Austrian princes, the utmost that he could expect was apathy. From the Silesian Catholics he could hardly expect anything but resistance.

Some States have been enabled, by their geographical position, to defend themselves with advantage against immense force. The sea has repeatedly protected England against the fury of the whole Continent. The Venetian government, driven from its possessions on the land, could still bid defiance to the confederates of Cambray from the arsenal amidst the lagoons. More than one great and well-appointed army, which regarded the shepherds of Switzerland as an easy prey, has perished in the passes of the Alps. Frederick had no such advantage. The form of his States, their situation, the nature of the ground, all were against him. His long, scattered, straggling territory seemed to have been shaped with an express view to the convenience of invaders, and was protected by no sea, by no chain of hills. Scarcely any corner of it was a week's march from the territory of the enemy. The capital itself, in the event of war, would be constantly exposed to insult. In truth, there was hardly a politician or a soldier in Europe who doubted that the conflict would be terminated in a very few days by the prostration of the house of Brandenburg.

Nor was Frederick's own opinion very different. He anticipated nothing short of his own ruin, and of the ruin of his family. Yet there was still a chance, a slender chance of escape. His States had at least the advantage of a central position; his enemies were widely separated from each other, and could not conveniently unite their overwhelming forces on one point. They inhabited different climates and it was probable that the season of the year which would be

best suited to the military operations of one portion of the league, would be unfavorable to those of another portion. The Prussian monarchy, too, was free from some infirmities which were found in empires far more extensive and magnificent. Its effective strength for a desperate struggle was not to be measured merely by the number of square miles or the number of people. In that square but well-knit and well-exercised body, there was nothing but sinew and muscle and bone. No public creditors looked for dividends. No distant colonies required defense. No court, filled with flatterers and mistresses, devoured the pay of fifty battalions. The Prussian army, though far inferior in number to the troops which were about to be opposed to it, was yet strong out of all proportion to the extent of the Prussian dominions. It was also admirably trained and admirably officered, accustomed to obey and accustomed to conquer. The revenue was not only unencumbered by debt, but exceeded the ordinary outlay in time of peace. Alone of all the European princes, Frederick had a treasure laid up for a day of difficulty. Above all, he was one and his enemies were many. In their camps would certainly be found the jealousy, the dissension, the slackness inseparable from coalitions; on his side was the energy, the unity, the secrecy of a strong dictatorship. To a certain extent the deficiency of military means might be supplied by the resources of military art. Small as the king's army was, when compared with the six hundred thousand men whom the confederates could bring into the field, celerity of movement might in some degree compensate for

deficiency of bulk. It was thus just possible that genius, judgment, resolution, and good luck united might protract the struggle during a campaign or two; and to gain even a month was of importance. It could not be long before the vices which are found in all extensive confederacies would begin to show themselves. Every member of the league would think his own share of the war too large, and his own share of the spoils too small. Complaints and recrimination would abound. The Turk might stir on the Danube; the statesmen of France might discover the error which they had committed in abandoning the fundamental principles of their national policy. Above all, death might rid Prussia of its most formidable enemies. The war was the effect of the personal aversion with which three or four sovereigns regarded Frederick; and the decease of any of those sovereigns might produce a complete revolution in the state of Europe.

In the midst of an horizon generally dark and stormy, Frederick should discern one bright spot. The peace which had been concluded between England and France in 1748 had been in Europe no more than an armistice; and not even been an armistice in the other quarters of the globe. In India the sovereignty of the Carnatic was disputed between two great Mussulman houses; Fort Saint George had taken the one side, Pondicherry the other; and in a series of battles and sieges the troops of Lawrence and Clive had been opposed to those of Dupleix. A struggle less important in its consequence, but not less likely to produce immediate irritation, was car-

ried on between those French and English adventurers who kidnapped negroes and collected gold dust on the coast of Guinea. But it was in North America that the emulation and mutual aversion of the two nations were most conspicuous. The French attempted to hem in the English colonists by a chain of military posts, extending from the Great Lakes to the mouth of the Mississippi. The English took arms. The wild aboriginal tribes appeared on each side mingled with the "Pale Faces." Battles were fought; forts were stormed; and hideous stories about stakes, scalplings, and death-songs reached Europe, and inflamed that national animosity which the rivalry of ages had produced. The disputes between France and England came to a crisis at the very time when the tempest which had been gathering was about to burst on Prussia. The tastes and interests of Frederick would have led him, if he had been allowed an option, to side with the house of Bourbon. But the folly of the court of Versailles left him no choice. France became the tool of Austria, and Frederick was forced to become the ally of England. He could not, indeed, expect that a power which covered the sea with its fleets, and which had to make war at once on the Ohio and the Ganges, would be able to spare a large number of troops for operations in Germany. But England, though poor compared with the England of our time, was far richer than any country on the Continent. The amount of her revenue and the resources which she found in her credit though they may be thought small by a generation which has seen her raise a hun-

dred and thirty millions in a single year, appeared miraculous to the politicians of that age. A very moderate portion of her wealth, expended by an able and economical prince, in a country where prices were low, would be sufficient to equip and maintain a formidable army.

Such was the situation in which Frederick found himself. He saw the whole extent of his peril. He saw that there was still a faint possibility of escape; and, with prudent temerity, he determined to strike the first blow. It was in the month of August, 1756, that the great war of the Seven Years commenced. The king demanded of the Empress-Queen a distinct explanation of her intentions, and plainly told her that he should consider a refusal as a declaration of war. "I want," he said, "no answer in the style of an oracle." He received an answer at once haughty and evasive. In an instant the rich electorate of Saxony was overflowed by sixty thousand Prussian troops. Augustus with his army occupied a strong position at Pirna. The Queen of Poland was at Dresden. In a few days Pirna was blockaded and Dresden was taken. The object of Frederick was to obtain possession of the Saxon State Papers; for those papers, he well knew, contained ample proofs that though apparently an aggressor, he was really acting in self-defense. The Queen of Poland, as well acquainted as Frederick with the importance of those documents, had packed them up, had concealed them in her bed-chamber, and was about to send them off to Warsaw, when a Prussian officer made his appearance. In the hope that no soldier would

venture to outrage a lady, a queen, a daughter of an emperor, the mother-in-law of a dauphin, she placed herself before the trunk, and at length sat down on it. But all resistance was vain. The papers were carried to Frederick, who found in them, as he expected, abundant evidence of the designs of the coalition. The most important documents were instantly published, and the effect of the publication was great. It was clear that, of whatever sins the King of Prussia might formerly have been guilty, he was now the injured party, and had merely anticipated a blow intended to destroy him.

The Saxon camp at Pirna was in the mean time closely invested; but the besieged were not without hopes of succor. A great Austrian army under Marshal Brown was about to pour through the passes which separate Bohemia from Saxony. Frederick left at Pirna a force sufficient to deal with the Saxons, hastened into Bohemia, encountered Brown at Lowositz, and defeated him. This battle decided the fate of Saxony. Augustus and his favorite, Buhl, fled to Poland. The whole army of the electorate capitulated. From that time till the end of the war, Frederick treated Saxony as a part of his dominions, or, rather, he acted towards the Saxons in a manner which may serve to illustrate the whole meaning of that tremendous sentence—*subjectos tanquam suos, viles tanquam alienos*. Saxony was as much in his power as Brandenburg; and he had no such interest in the welfare of Saxony as he had in the welfare of Brandenburg. He accordingly levied troops and exacted contributions throughout the

enslaved province, with far more rigor than in any part of his own dominions. Seventeen thousand men who had been in the camp at Pirna were half compelled, half persuaded, to enlist under their conqueror. Thus, within a few weeks from the commencement of hostilities, one of the confederates had been disarmed, and his weapons pointed against the rest.

The winter put a stop to military operations. All had hitherto gone well. But the real tug of war was still to come. It was easy to foresee that the year 1757 would be a memorable era in the history of Europe.

The scheme for the campaign was simple, bold, and judicious. The Duke of Cumberland with an English and Hanoverian army was in Western Germany, and might be able to prevent the French troops from attacking Prussia. The Russians, confined by their snows, would probably not stir till the spring was far advanced. Saxony was prostrated. Sweden could do nothing very important. During a few months Frederick would have to deal with Austria alone. Even thus the odds were against him. But ability and courage have often triumphed against odds still more formidable.

Early in 1757 the Prussian army in Saxony began to move. Through four defiles in the mountains they came pouring into Bohemia. Prague was his first mark; but the ulterior object was probably Vienna. At Prague lay Marshal Brown with one great army. Daun, the most cautious and fortunate of the Austrian captains, was advancing with another. Fred-

erick determined to overwhelm Brown before Daun should arrive. On the sixth of May was fought, under those walls which a hundred and thirty years before had witnessed the victory of the Catholic league and the flight of the unhappy Palatine, a battle more bloody than any which Europe saw during the long interval between Malplaquet and Eylau. The king and Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick were distinguished on that day by their valor and exertions. But the chief glory was with Schwerin. When the Prussian infantry wavered, the stout old marshal snatched the colors from an ensign, and, waving them in the air, led back his regiment to the charge. Thus at seventy-two years of age he fell in the thickest of the battle, still grasping the standard which bears the black eagle on the field argent. The victory remained with the king. But it had been dearly purchased. Whole columns of his bravest warriors had fallen. He admitted that he had lost eighteen thousand men. Of the enemy, twenty-four thousand had been killed, wounded, or taken.

Part of the defeated army was shut up in Prague. Part fled to join the troops which, under the command of Daun, were now close at hand. Frederick determined to play over the same game which had succeeded at Lowositz. He left a large force to besiege Prague, and at the head of thirty thousand men he marched against Daun. The cautious marshal, though he had great superiority in numbers, would risk nothing. He occupied at Kolin a position almost impregnable and awaited the attack of the king.

It was the 18th of June—a day which, if the Greek

superstition still retained its influence, would be held sacred to Nemesis—a day on which the two greatest princes and soldiers of modern times were taught by a terrible experience that neither skill nor valor can fix the inconstancy of fortune. The battle began before noon; and part of the Prussian army maintained the contest till after the midsummer sun had gone down. But at length the king found that his troops, having been repeatedly driven back with frightful carnage, could no longer be led to the charge. He was with difficulty persuaded to quit the field. The officers of his personal staff were under the necessity of expostulating with him, and one of them took the liberty to say, “Does Your Majesty mean to storm the batteries alone?” Thirteen thousand of his bravest followers had perished. Nothing remained for him but to retreat in good order, to raise the siege of Prague, and to hurry his army by different routes out of Bohemia.

This stroke seemed to be final. Frederick’s situation had at best been such, that only an uninterrupted run of good luck could save him, as it seemed, from ruin. And now, almost in the outset of the contest, he had met with a check which, even in a war between equal powers, would have been felt as serious. He had owed much to the opinion which all Europe entertained of his army. Since his accession, his soldiers had in many successive battles been victorious over the Austrians. But the glory had departed from his arms. All whom his malevolent sarcasms had wounded made haste to avenge themselves by scoffing at the scoffer. His soldiers

had ceased to confide in his star. In every part of his camp his dispositions were severely criticised. Even in his own family he had detractors. His next brother William, heir-presumptive, or rather, in truth, heir-apparent to the throne, and great-grandfather of the present king, could not refrain from lamenting his own fate and that of the house of Hohenzollern, once so great and so prosperous, but now, by the rash ambition of its chief, made a by-word to all nations. These complaints, and some blunders which William committed during the retreat from Bohemia, called forth the bitter displeasure of the inexorable king. The prince's heart was broken by the cutting reproaches of his brother; he quitted the army, retired to a country seat, and in a short time died of shame and vexation.

It seemed that the king's distress could hardly be increased. Yet at this moment another blow not less terrible than that of Kolin fell upon him. The French under Marshal D'Estrées had invaded Germany. The Duke of Cumberland had given them battle at Hastenbeck, and had been defeated. In order to save the Electorate of Hanover from entire subjugation, he had made, at Clostern Severn, an arrangement with the French generals, which left them at liberty to turn their arms against the Prussian dominions.

That nothing might be wanting to Frederick's distress, he lost his mother just at this time; and he appears to have felt the loss more than was to be expected from the hardness and severity of his character. In truth, his misfortunes had now cut to the

quick. The mocker, the tyrant, the most rigorous, the most imperious, the most cynical of men, was very unhappy. His face was so haggard and his form so thin, that when on his return from Bohemia he passed through Leipsic, the people hardly knew him again. His sleep was broken; the tears in spite of himself often started into his eyes; and the grave began to present itself to his agitated mind as the best refuge from misery and dishonor. His resolution was fixed never to be taken alive, and never to make peace on condition of descending from his place among the powers of Europe. He saw nothing left for him except to die; and he deliberately chose his mode of death. He always carried about with him a sure and speedy poison in a small glass case; and to the few in whom he placed confidence he made no mystery of his resolution.

But we should very imperfectly describe the state of Frederick's mind, if we left out of view the laughable peculiarities which contrasted so singularly with the gravity, energy, and harshness of his character. It is difficult to say whether the tragic or the comic predominated in the strange scene which was then acted. In the midst of all the great king's calamities, his passion for writing indifferent poetry grew stronger and stronger. Enemies all around him, despair in his heart, pills of corrosive sublimate hidden in his clothes, he poured forth hundreds upon hundreds of lines, hateful to gods and men—the insipid dregs of Voltaire's Hippocrene—the faint echo of the lyre of Chaulieu. It is amusing to compare what he did during the last months of 1757 with what he

wrote during the same time. It may be doubted whether any equal portion of the life of Hannibal, of Cæsar, or of Napoleon, will bear a comparison with that short period, the most brilliant in the history of Prussia and of Frederick. Yet at this very time the scanty leisure of the illustrious warrior was employed in producing odes and epistles, a little better than Cibber's, and a little worse than Hayley's. Here and there a manly sentiment, which deserves to be in prose, makes its appearance in company with Prometheus and Orpheus, Elysium and Acheron, the plaintive Philomel, the poppies of Morpheus, and all the other frippery which, like a robe tossed by a proud beauty to her waiting-women, has long been contemptuously abandoned by genius to mediocrity. We hardly know any instance of the strength and weakness of human nature so striking and so grotesque as the character of this haughty, vigilant, resolute, sagacious blue-stocking, half Mithridates and half Trissotin, bearing up against a world in arms, with an ounce of poison in one pocket and a quire of bad verses in the other.

Frederick had some time before made advances towards a reconciliation with Voltaire, and some civil letters had passed between them. After the battle of Kolin their epistolary intercourse became, at least in seeming, friendly and confidential. We do not know any collection of letters which throw so much light on the darkest and most intricate parts of human nature as the correspondence of these strange beings after they had exchanged forgiveness. Both felt that the quarrel had lowered them in the

public estimation. They admired each other. They stood in need of each other. The great king wished to be handed down to posterity by the great writer. The great writer felt himself exalted by the homage of the great king. Yet the wounds which they had inflicted on each other were too deep to be effaced, or even perfectly healed. Not only did the scars remain ; the sore places often festered and bled afresh.

The letters consisted for the most part of compliments, thanks, offers of service, assurances of attachment. But if anything brought back to Frederick's recollection the cunning and mischievous pranks by which Voltaire had provoked him, some expression of contempt and displeasure broke forth in the midst of his eulogy. It was much worse when anything recalled to the mind of Voltaire the outrages which he and his kinswoman had suffered at Frankfort. All at once his flowing panegyric is turned into invective. "Remember how you behaved to me. For your sake I have lost the favor of my king. For your sake I am an exile from my country. I loved you. I trusted myself to you. I had no wish but to end my life in your service. And what was my reward? Stripped of all you had bestowed on me, the key, the order, the pension, I was forced to fly from your territories. I was hunted as if I had been a deserter from your grenadiers. I was arrested, insulted, plundered. My niece was dragged in the mud of Frankfort by your soldiers as if she had been some wretched follower of your camp. You have great talents. You have good qualities. But you

have one odious vice. You delight in the abasement of your fellow-creatures. You have brought disgrace on the name of philosopher. You have given some color to the slanders of the bigots who say that no confidence can be placed in the justice or humanity of those who reject the Christian faith." Then the king answers with less heat, but with equal severity: "You know that you behaved shamefully in Prussia. It is well for you that you had to deal with a man so indulgent to the infirmities of genius as I am. You richly deserved to see the inside of a dungeon. Your talents are not more widely known than your faithlessness and your malevolence. The grave itself is no asylum from your spite. Maupertuis is dead; but you still go on calumniating and deriding him, as if you had not made him miserable enough while he was living. Let us have no more of this. And, above all, let me hear no more of your niece. I am sick to death of her name. I can bear with your faults for the sake of your merits; but she has not written *Mahomet* or *Merope*."

An explosion of this kind, it might be supposed, would necessarily put an end to all amicable communication. But it was not so. After every outbreak of ill-humor this extraordinary pair became more loving than before, and exchanged compliments and assurances of mutual regard with a wonderful air of sincerity.

It may well be supposed that men who wrote thus to each other were not very guarded in what they said of each other. The English ambassador, Mitchell, who knew that the King of Prussia was con-

stantly writing to Voltaire with the greatest freedom on the most important subjects, was amazed to hear His Majesty designate this highly-favored correspondent as a bad-hearted fellow, the greatest rascal on the face of the earth. And the language which the poet held about the king was not much more respectful.

It would probably have puzzled Voltaire himself to say what was his real feeling towards Frederick. It was compounded of all sentiments, from enmity to friendship, and from scorn to admiration; and the proportions in which these elements were mixed changed every moment. The old patriarch resembled the spoiled child who screams, stamps, cuffs, laughs, kisses, and cuddles within one quarter of an hour. His resentment was not extinguished; yet he was not without sympathy for his old friend. As a Frenchman, he wished success to the arms of his country. As a philosopher, he was anxious for the stability of a throne on which a philosopher sat. He longed both to save and to humble Frederick. There was one way, and only one, in which all his conflicting feelings could at once be gratified. If Frederick were preserved by the interference of France, if it were known that for that interference he was indebted to the mediation of Voltaire, this would indeed be delicious revenge; this would indeed be to heap coals of fire on that haughty head. Nor did the vain and restless poet think it impossible that he might, from his hermitage near the Alps, dictate peace to Europe. D'Estrées had quitted Hanover, and the command of the French army had

been intrusted to the Duke of Richelieu, a man whose chief distinction was derived from his success in gallantry. Richelieu was, in truth, the most eminent of that race of seducers by profession who furnished Crébillon the younger and La Clos with models for their heroes. In his earlier days the royal house itself had not been secure from his presumptuous love. He was believed to have carried his conquests into the family of Orleans; and some suspected that he was not unconcerned in the mysterious remorse which imbittered the last hours of the charming mother of Louis the Fifteenth. But the duke was now fifty years old. With a heart deeply corrupted by vice, a head long accustomed to think only on trifles, an impaired constitution, an impaired fortune, and, worst of all, a very red nose, he was entering on a dull, frivolous, and unrespected old age. Without one qualification for military command except that personal courage which was common to him and the whole nobility of France, he had been placed at the head of the army of Hanover; and in that situation he did his best to repair, by extortion and corruption, the injury which he had done to his property by a life of dissolute profusion.

The Duke of Richelieu to the end of his life hated the philosophers as a sect—not for those parts of their system which a good and wise man would have condemned, but for their virtues, for their spirit of free inquiry, and for their hatred of those social abuses of which he was himself the personification. But he, like many of those who thought with him,

excepted Voltaire from the list of proscribed writers. He frequently sent flattering letters to Ferney. He did the patriarch the honor to borrow money of him, and even carried his condescending friendship so far as to forget to pay interest. Voltaire thought that it might be in his power to bring the duke and the King of Prussia into communication with each other. He wrote earnestly to both; and he so far succeeded that a correspondence between them was commenced.

But it was to very different means that Frederick was to owe his deliverance. At the beginning of November, the net seemed to have closed completely round him. The Russians were in the field, and were spreading devastation through his eastern provinces. Silesia was overrun by the Austrians. A great French army was advancing from the west under the command of Marshal Soubise, a prince of the great Armorican house of Rohan. Berlin itself had been taken and plundered by the Croats. Such was the situation from which Frederick extricated himself, with dazzling glory, in the short space of thirty days.

He marched first against Soubise. On the 5th of November the armies met at Rosbach. The French were two to one; but they were ill-disciplined, and their general was a dunce. The tactics of Frederick and the well-regulated valor of the Prussian troops obtained a complete victory. Seven thousand of the invaders were made prisoners. Their guns, their colors, their baggage, fell into the hands of the conquerors. Those who escaped fled as confusedly as a

mob scattered by cavalry. Victorious in the west, the king turned his arms towards Silesia. In that quarter everything seemed to be lost. Breslau had fallen; and Charles of Lorraine, with a mighty power, held the whole province. On the 5th of December, exactly one month after the battle of Rosbach, Frederick, with forty thousand men, and Prince Charles, at the head of not less than sixty thousand, met at Leuthen hard by Breslau. The king, who was, in general, perhaps too much inclined to consider the common soldier as a mere machine, resorted, on this great day, to means resembling those which Bonaparte afterwards employed with such signal success for the purpose of stimulating military enthusiasm. The principal officers were convoked. Frederick addressed them with great force and pathos, and directed them to speak to their men as he had spoken to them. When the armies were set in battle array, the Prussian troops were in a state of fierce excitement; but their excitement showed itself after the fashion of a grave people. The columns advanced to the attack chanting, to the sound of drums and fifes, the rude hymns of the old Saxon Herbholds. They had never fought so well; nor had the genius of their chief ever been so conspicuous. "That battle," said Napoleon, "was a masterpiece. Of itself it is sufficient to entitle Frederick to a place in the first rank among generals." The victory was complete. Twenty-seven thousand Austrians were killed, wounded, or taken; fifty stand of colors, a hundred guns, four thousand wagons, fell into the hands of the Prussians. Breslau opened

its gates; Silesia was reconquered; Charles of Lorraine retired to hide his shame and sorrow at Brussels; and Frederick allowed his troops to take some repose in winter quarters, after a campaign to the vicissitudes of which it will be difficult to find any parallel in ancient or modern history.

The king's fame filled all the world. He had, during the last year, maintained a contest, on terms of advantage, against three powers, the weakest of which had more than three times his resources. He had fought four great pitched battles against superior forces. Three of these battles he had gained; and the defeat of Kolin, repaired as it had been, rather raised than lowered his military renown. The victory of Leuthen is, to this day, the proudest on the roll of Prussian fame. Leipsic, indeed, and Waterloo, produced more important consequences to mankind. But the glory of Leipsic must be shared by the Prussians with the Austrians and Russians; and at Waterloo the British infantry bore the burden and heat of the day. The victory of Rosbach was, in a military point of view, less honorable than that of Leuthen, for it was gained over an incapable general and a disorganized army. But the moral effect which it produced was immense. All the preceding triumphs of Frederick had been triumphs over Germans, and could excite no emotions of natural pride among the German people. It was impossible that a Hessian or a Hanoverian could feel any patriotic exultation at hearing that Pomeranians slaughtered *Moravians*, or that Saxon banners had been hung in *the churches of Berlin*. Indeed, though the military

character of the Germans justly stood high throughout the world, they could boast of no great day which belonged to them as a people;—of no Agincourt, of no Bannockburn. Most of their victories had been gained over each other; and their most splendid exploits against foreigners had been achieved under the command of Eugene, who was himself a foreigner.

The news of the battle of Rosbach stirred the blood of the whole of the mighty population from the Alps to the Baltic, and from the borders of Courland to those of Lorraine. Westphalia and Lower Saxony had been deluged by a great host of strangers, whose speech was unintelligible, and whose petulant and licentious manners had excited the strongest feelings of disgust and hatred. That great host had been put to flight by a small band of German warriors, led by a prince of German blood on the side of father and mother, and marked by the fair hair and the clear blue eye of Germany. Never since the dissolution of the empire of Charlemagne had the Teutonic race won such a field against the French. The tidings called forth a general burst of delight and pride from the whole of the great family which spoke the various dialects of the ancient language of Arminius. The fame of Frederick began to supply, in some degree, the place of a common government and of a common capital. It became a rallying point for all true Germans—a subject of mutual congratulation to the Bavarian and the Westphalian, to the citizen of Frankfort and the citizen of Nuremburg. Then *first it was manifest that the Germans were truly a*

nation. Then first was discernible that patriotic spirit which, in 1813, achieved the great deliverance of central Europe, and which still guards, and long will guard against foreign ambition, the old freedom of the Rhine.

Nor were the effects produced by that celebrated day merely political. The greatest masters of German poetry and eloquence have admitted that, though the great king neither valued nor understood his native language, though he looked on France as the only seat of taste and philosophy, yet, in his own despite, he did much to emancipate the genius of his countrymen from the foreign yoke; and that, in the act of vanquishing Soubise, he was unintentionally rousing the spirit which soon began to question the literary precedence of Boileau and Voltaire. So strangely do events confound all the plans of man! A prince who read only French, who wrote only French, who ranked as a French classic, became, quite unconsciously, the means of liberating half the Continent from the dominion of that French criticism of which he was himself to the end of his life a slave. Yet even the enthusiasm of Germany in favor of Frederick hardly equaled the enthusiasm of England. The birthday of our ally was celebrated with as much enthusiasm as that of our own sovereign, and at night the streets of London were in a blaze with illuminations. Portraits of the Hero of Rosbach, with his cocked hat and long pigtail, were in every house. An attentive observer will, at this day, find in the parlors of old-fashioned inns, and in the *portfolios* of printsellers, twenty portraits of Fred-

erick for one of George II. The sign-painters were everywhere employed in touching up Admiral Vernon into the King of Prussia. Some young Englishmen of rank proposed to visit Germany as volunteers, for the purpose of learning the art of war under the greatest of commanders. This last proof of British attachment and admiration Frederick politely but firmly declined. His camp was no place for amateur students of military science. The Prussian discipline was rigorous even to cruelty. The officers, while in the field, were expected to practice an abstemiousness and self-denial such as was hardly surpassed by the most rigid monastic orders. However noble their birth, however high their rank in the service, they were not permitted to eat from anything better than pewter. It was a high crime even in a count and field-marshal to have a single silver spoon among his baggage. Gay young Englishmen of twenty thousand a year, accustomed to liberty and to luxury, would not easily submit to these Spartan restraints. The king could not venture to keep them in order as he kept his own subjects in order. Situated as he was with respect to England, he could not well imprison or shoot refractory Howards and Cavendishes. On the other hand, the example of a few fine gentlemen, attended by chariots and livery servants, eating in plate, and drinking champagne and tokay, was enough to corrupt his whole army. He thought it best to make a stand at first, and civilly refused to admit such dangerous companions among his troops.

The help of England was bestowed in a manner

far more useful and more acceptable. An annual subsidy of near seven hundred thousand pounds enabled the king to add probably more than fifty thousand men to his army, Pitt, now at the height of power and popularity, undertook the task of defending Western Germany against France, and asked Frederick only for the loan of a general. The general selected was Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, who had attained to high distinction in the Prussian service. He was put at the head of an army, partly English, partly Hanoverian, partly composed of mercenaries hired from the petty princes of the empire. He soon vindicated the choice of the two allied courts, and proved himself the second general of the age.

Frederick passed the winter at Breslau, in reading, writing, and preparing for the next campaign. The havoc which the war had made among his troops was rapidly repaired, and in the spring of 1758 he was again ready for the conflict. Prince Ferdinand kept the French in check. The king, in the mean time, after attempting against the Austrians some operations which led to no very important result, marched to encounter the Russians, who, slaying, burning, and wasting wherever they turned, had penetrated into the heart of his realm. He gave them battle at Zorndorf, near Frankfort on the Oder. The fight was long and bloody. Quarter was neither given nor taken; for the Germans and Scythians regarded each other with bitter aversion, and the sight of the ravages committed by the half-savage invaders *had incensed* the king and his army. The Russians

were overthrown with great slaughter, and for a few months no further danger was to be apprehended from the east.

A day of thanksgiving was proclaimed by the king, and was celebrated with pride and delight by his people. The rejoicings in England were not less enthusiastic or less sincere. This may be selected as the point of time at which the military glory of Frederick reached the zenith. In the short space of three-quarters of a year he had won three great battles over the armies of three mighty and warlike monarchies—France, Austria, and Russia.

But it was decreed that the temper of that strong mind should be tried by both extremes of fortune in rapid succession. Close upon this bright series of triumphs came a series of disasters, such as would have blighted the fame and broken the heart of almost any other commander. Yet Frederick, in the midst of his calamities, was still an object of admiration to his subjects, his allies, and his enemies. Overwhelmed by adversity, sick of life, he still maintained the contest, greater in defeat, in flight, and in what seemed hopeless ruin, than on the fields of his proudest victories.

Having vanquished the Russians, he hastened into Saxony to oppose the troops of the Empress-Queen, commanded by Daun, the most cautious, and Laudohn, the most inventive and enterprising of her generals. These two celebrated commanders agreed on a scheme, in which the prudence of the one and the vigor of the other seem to have happily combined. At dead of night they surprised the king in

his camp at Hochkirchen. His presence of mind saved his troops from destruction, but nothing could save them from defeat and severe loss. Marshal Keith was among the slain. The first roar of the guns roused the noble exile from his rest, and he was instantly in the front of the battle. He received a dangerous wound, but refused to quit the field, and was in the act of rallying his broken troops, when an Austrian bullet terminated his checkered and eventful life.

The misfortune was serious. But, of all generals, Frederick understood best how to repair defeat, and Daun understood least how to improve victory. In a few days the Prussian army was as formidable as before the battle. The prospect was, however, gloomy. An Austrian army under General Harsch had invaded Silesia, and invested the fortress of Neisse. Daun, after his success at Hochkirchen, had written to Harsch in very confident terms: "Go on with your operations against Neisse. Be quite at ease as to the king. I will give you a good account of him." In truth, the position of the Prussians was full of difficulties. Between them and Silesia lay the victorious army of Daun. It was not easy for them to reach Silesia at all. If they did reach it, they left Saxony exposed to the Austrians. But the vigor and activity of Frederick surmounted every obstacle. He made a circuitous march of extraordinary rapidity, passed Daun, hastened into Silesia, raised the siege of Neisse, and drove Harsch into Bohemia. Daun availed himself of the king's absence to attack *Dresden*. The Prussians defended it desperately.

The inhabitants of that wealthy and polished capital begged in vain for mercy from the garrison within, and from the besiegers without. The beautiful suburbs were burned to the ground. It was clear that the town, if won at all, would be won street by street by the bayonet. At this conjuncture came news that Frederick, having cleared Silesia of his enemies, was returning by forced marches into Saxony. Daun retired from before Dresden, and fell back into the Austrian territories. The king, over heaps of ruins, made his triumphant entry into the unhappy metropolis, which had so cruelly expiated the weak and perfidious policy of its sovereign. It was now the 20th of November. The cold weather suspended military operations, and the king again took up his winter-quarters at Breslau.

The third of the seven terrible years was over; and Frederick still stood his ground. He had been recently tried by domestic as well as by military disasters. On the 14th of October, the day on which he was defeated at Hochkirchen, the day on the anniversary of which, forty-eight years later, a defeat far more tremendous laid the Prussian monarchy in the dust, died Wilhelmina, Margravine of Bareuth. From the portraits which we have of her, by her own hand, and by the hands of the most discerning of her contemporaries, we should pronounce her to have been coarse, indelicate, and a good hater, but not destitute of kind and generous feelings. Her mind, naturally strong and observant, had been highly cultivated; and she was, and deserved to be, Frederick's favorite sister. He felt the loss as much

as it was in his iron nature to feel the loss of anything but a province or a battle.

At Breslau, during the winter, he was indefatigable in his poetical labors. The most spirited lines, perhaps, that he ever wrote are to be found in a bitter lampoon on Louis and Madame de Pompadour, which he composed at this time and sent to Voltaire. The verses were, indeed, so good, that Voltaire was afraid that he might himself be suspected of having written them, or at least of having corrected them; and partly from fright—partly, we fear, from love of mischief—sent them to the Duke of Choiseul, then prime minister of France. Choiseul very wisely determined to encounter Frederick at Frederick's own weapons, and applied for assistance to Palissot, who had some skill as a versifier, and who, though he had not yet made himself famous by bringing Rousseau and Helvetius on the stage, was known to possess some little talent for satire. Palissot produced some very stinging lines on the moral and literary character of Frederick, and these lines the duke sent to Voltaire. This war of couplets, following close on the carnage of Zorndorf and the conflagration of Dresden, illustrates well the strangely compounded character of the king of Prussia.

At this moment he was assailed by a new enemy. Benedict XIV., the best and wisest of the two hundred and fifty successors of St. Peter, was no more. During the short interval between his reign and that of his disciple Ganganelli, the chief seat in the Church of Rome was filled by Rezzonico, who took the name of Clement XIII. This absurd priest de-

terminated to try what the weight of his authority could effect in favor of the orthodox Maria Theresa against a heretic king. At the high mass on Christmas-day, a sword with a rich belt and scabbard, a hat of crimson velvet lined with ermine, and a dove of pearls, the mystic symbol of the Divine Comforter, were solemnly blessed by the supreme pontiff, and were sent with great ceremony to Marshal Daun, the conqueror of Kolin and Hochkirchen. This mark of favor had more than once been bestowed by the popes on the great champions of the faith. Similar honors had been paid, more than six centuries earlier, by Urban II. to Godfrey of Bouillon. Similar honors had been conferred on Alba for destroying the liberties of the Low Countries, and on John Sobiesky after the deliverance of Vienna. But the presents which were received with profound reverence by the Baron of the Holy Sepulcher in the eleventh century, and which had not wholly lost their value even in the seventeenth century, appeared inexpressibly ridiculous to a generation which read Montesquieu and Voltaire. Frederick wrote sarcastic verses on the gifts, the giver, and the receiver. But the public wanted no prompter; and a universal roar of laughter from Petersburg to Lisbon reminded the Vatican that the age of crusades was over.

The fourth campaign, the most disastrous of all the campaigns of this fearful war, had now opened. The Austrians filled Saxony, and menaced Berlin. The Russians defeated the king's generals on the Oder, threatened Silesia, effected a junction with Laudohn, and intrenched themselves strongly at Ka-

nersdorf. Frederick hastened to attack them. A great battle was fought. During the earlier part of the day everything yielded to the impetuosity of the Prussians, and to the skill of their chief. The lines were forced. Half the Russian guns were taken. The king sent off a courier to Berlin with two lines, announcing a complete victory. But, in the mean time, the stubborn Russians, defeated yet unbroken, had taken up their stand in an almost impregnable position, on an eminence where the Jews of Frankfort were wont to bury their dead. Here the battle re-commenced. The Prussian infantry, exhausted by six hours of hard fighting under a sun which equalled the tropical heat, were yet brought up repeatedly to the attack, but in vain. The king led three charges in person. Two horses were killed under him. The officers of his staff fell all around him. His coat was pierced by several bullets. All was in vain. His infantry was driven back with frightful slaughter. Terror began to spread fast from man to man. At that moment the fiery cavalry of Laudohn, still fresh, rushed on the wavering ranks. Then followed a universal rout. Frederick himself was on the point of falling into the hands of the conquerors, and was with difficulty saved by a gallant officer, who, at the head of a handful of Hussars, made good a diversion of a few minutes. Shattered in body, shattered in mind, the king reached that night a village which the Cossacks had plundered; and there, in a ruined and deserted farm-house, flung himself on a heap of straw. He had sent to Berlin a *second dispatch* very different from his first: "Let the

royal family leave Berlin. Send the archives to Potsdam. The town may make terms with the enemy."


The defeat was, in truth, overwhelming. Of fifty thousand men who had that morning marched under the black eagles, not three thousand remained together. The king bethought him again of his corrosive sublimate, and wrote to bid adieu to his friends, and to give directions as to the measures to be taken in the event of his death: "I have no resource left"—such is the language of one of his letters—"all is lost. I will not survive the ruin of my country. Farewell, forever."

But the mutual jealousies of the confederates prevented them from following up their victory. They lost a few days in loitering and squabbling; and a few days, improved by Frederick, were worth more than the years of other men. On the morning after the battle, he had got together eighteen thousand of his troops. Very soon his force amounted to thirty thousand. Guns were procured from the neighboring fortresses; and there was again an army. Berlin was, for the present, safe; but calamities came pouring on the king in uninterrupted succession. One of his generals, with a large body of troops, was taken at Maxen; another was defeated at Meissen; and when at length the campaign of 1759 closed, in the midst of a rigorous winter, the situation of Prussia appeared desperate. The only consoling circumstance was that, in the West, Ferdinand of Brunswick had been more fortunate than his master; and by a series of exploits, of which the battle of Minden was the most

glorious, had removed all apprehension of danger on the side of France.

The fifth year was now about to commence. It seemed impossible that the Prussian territories, repeatedly devastated by hundreds of thousands of invaders, could longer support the contest. But the king carried on war as no European power has ever carried on war, except the Committee of Public Safety during the great agony of the French Revolution. He governed his kingdom as he would have governed a besieged town, not caring to what extent property was destroyed, or the pursuits of civil life suspended, so that he did but make head against the enemy. As long as there was a man left in Prussia, that man might carry a musket; as long as there was a horse left, that horse might draw artillery. The coin was debased, the civil functionaries were left unpaid; in some provinces civil government altogether ceased to exist. But there were still rye-bread and potatoes; there were still lead and gunpowder; and, while the means of sustaining and destroying life remained, Frederick was determined to fight it out to the very last.

The earlier part of the campaign of 1760 was unfavorable to him. Berlin was again occupied by the enemy. Great contributions were levied on the inhabitants, and the royal palace was plundered. But at length, after two years of calamity, victory came back to his arms. At Lignitz he gained a great battle over Laudohn; at Torgau, after a day of horrible carnage, he triumphed over Daun. The fifth year *closed and still the event was in suspense.* In the



countries where the war had raged, the misery and exhaustion were more appalling than ever; but still there were left men and beasts, arms and food, and still Frederick fought on. In truth he had now been baited into savageness. His heart was ulcerated with hatred. The implacable resentment with which his enemies persecuted him, though originally provoked by his own unprincipled ambition, excited in him a thirst for vengeance which he did not even attempt to conceal. "It is hard," he says in one of his letters, "for a man to bear what I bear. I begin to feel that, as the Italians say, revenge is a pleasure for the gods. My philosophy is worn out by suffering. I am no saint, like those of whom we read in the legends; and I will own that I should die content if only I could first inflict a portion of the misery which I endure."

Borne up by such feelings, he struggled with various success, but constant glory, through the campaign of 1761. On the whole, the result of this campaign was disastrous to Prussia. No great battle was gained by the enemy; but, in spite of the desperate bounds of the hunted tiger, the circle of pursuers was fast closing round him. Laudohn had surprised the important fortress of Schweidnitz. With that fortress, half of Silesia and the command of the most important defiles through the mountains had been transferred to the Austrians. The Russians had overpowered the king's generals in Pomerania. The country was so completely desolated that he began, by his own confession, to look round him with blank despair, *unable to imagine where recruits, horses, or provisions were to be found.*

Just at this time two great events brought on a complete change in the relations of almost all the powers of Europe. One of those events was the retirement of Mr. Pitt from office; the other was the death of the Empress Elizabeth of Russia.

The retirement of Pitt seemed to be an omen of utter ruin to the House of Brandenburg. His proud and vehement nature was incapable of anything that looked like either fear or treachery. He had often declared that, while he was in power, England should never make a peace of Utrecht—should never, for any selfish object, abandon an ally even in the last extremity of distress. The Continental war was his own war. He had been bold enough—he who in former times had attacked, with irresistible powers of oratory, the Hanoverian policy of Carteret and the German subsidies of Newcastle—to declare that Hanover ought to be as dear to us as Hampshire, and that he would conquer America in Germany. He had fallen; and the power which he had exercised, not always with discretion, but always with vigor and genius, had devolved on a favorite who was the representative of the Tory party—of the party which had thwarted William, which had persecuted Marlborough, and which had given up the Catalans to the vengeance of Philip of Anjou. To make peace with France—to shake off, with all, or more than all, the speed compatible with decency, every Continental connection,—these were among the chief objects of the new minister. The policy then followed inspired Frederick with an unjust but deep and bitter aversion to the *English* name; and produced effects which

are still felt throughout the civilized world. To that policy it was owing that, some years later, England could not find on the whole Continent a single ally to stand by her, in her extreme need, against the House of Bourbon. To that policy it was owing that Frederick, alienated from England, was compelled to connect himself closely, during his later years, with Russia; and was induced reluctantly to assist in that great crime, the fruitful parent of other great crimes—the first partition of Poland.

Scarcely had the retreat of Mr. Pitt deprived Prussia of her only friend, when the death of Elizabeth produced an entire revolution in the politics of the North. The Grand Duke Peter, her nephew, who now ascended the Russian throne, was not merely free from the prejudices which his aunt had entertained against Frederick, but was a worshiper, a servile imitator, a Boswell, of the great king. The days of the new czar's government were few and evil, but sufficient to produce a change in the whole state of Christendom. He set the Prussian prisoners at liberty, fitted them out decently, and sent them back to their master; he withdrew his troops from the provinces which Elizabeth had decided on incorporating with her dominions, and absolved all those Prussian subjects who had been compelled to swear fealty to Russia from their engagements.

Not content with concluding peace on terms favorable to Prussia, he solicited rank in the Prussian service, dressed himself in a Prussian uniform, wore the Black Eagle of Prussia on his breast, made preparations for visiting Prussia, in order to have an in-

terview with the object of his idolatry, and actually sent fifteen thousand excellent troops to re-enforce the shattered army of Frederick. Thus strengthened, the king speedily repaired the losses of the preceding year, reconquered Silesia, defeated Daun at Buckersdorf, invested and re-took Schweidnitz, and, at the close of the year, presented to the forces of Maria Theresa a front as formidable as before the great reverses of 1759. Before the end of the campaign, his friend the Emperor Peter having, by a series of absurd insults to the institutions, manners, and feelings of his people, united them in hostility to his person and government, was deposed and murdered. The empress, who, under the title of Catherine the Second, now assumed the supreme power, was, at the commencement of her administration, by no means partial to Frederick, and refused to permit her troops to remain under his command. But she observed the peace made by her husband; and Prussia was no longer threatened by danger from the East.

England and France at the same time paired off together. They concluded a treaty by which they bound themselves to observe neutrality with respect to the German war. Thus the coalitions on both sides were dissolved; and the original enemies, Austria and Prussia, remained alone confronting each other.

Austria had undoubtedly by far greater means than Prussia, and was less exhausted by hostilities; yet it seemed hardly possible that Austria could *affect alone* what she had in vain attempted to effect

when supported by France on the one side, and by Russia on the other. Danger also began to menace the imperial house from another quarter. The Ottoman Porte held threatening language, and a hundred thousand Turks were mustered on the frontiers of Hungary. The proud and revengeful spirit of the Empress-Queen at length gave way; and, in February, 1763, the peace of Hubertsburg put an end to the conflict which had, during seven years, devastated Germany. The king ceded nothing. The whole Continent in arms had proved unable to tear Silesia from that iron grasp.

The war was over. Frederick was safe. His glory was beyond the reach of envy. If he had not made conquests as vast as those of Alexander, of Cæsar, and of Napoleon,—if he had not, on field of battle, enjoyed the constant success of Marlborough and Wellington,—he had yet given an example, unrivaled in history, of what capacity and resolution can effect against the greatest superiority of power and the utmost spite of fortune. He entered Berlin in triumph, after an absence of more than six years. The streets were brilliantly lighted up, and as he passed along in an open carriage, with Ferdinand of Brunswick at his side, the multitude saluted him with loud praises and blessings. He was moved by those marks of attachment, and repeatedly exclaimed, “Long live my dear people! Long live my children!” Yet, even in the midst of that gay spectacle, he could not but perceive everywhere the traces of destruction and decay. The city had been more than once plundered. The population had

considerably diminished. Berlin, however, had suffered little when compared with most parts of the kingdom. The ruin of private fortunes, the distress of all ranks, was such as might appall the firmest mind. Almost every province had been the seat of war, and of war conducted with merciless ferocity. Clouds of Croats had descended on Silesia. Tens of thousands of Cossacks had been let loose on Pomerania and Brandenburg. The mere contributions levied by the invaders amounted, it was said, to more than a hundred millions of dollars; and the value of what they extorted was probably much less than the value of what they destroyed. The fields lay uncultivated. The very seed-corn had been devoured in the madness of hunger. Famine, and contagious maladies the effect of famine, had swept away the herds and flocks; and there was reason to fear that a great pestilence among the human race was likely to follow in the train of that tremendous war. Near fifteen thousand houses had been burned to the ground.

The population of the kingdom had in seven years decreased to the frightful extent of ten per cent. A sixth of the males capable of bearing arms had actually perished on the field of battle. In some districts no laborers except women were seen in the fields at harvest-time. In others the traveler passed shuddering through a succession of silent villages, in which not a single inhabitant remained. The currency had been debased; the authority of laws and magistrates had been suspended; the whole social system was deranged. For, during that convulsive

struggle, everything that was not military violence was anarchy. Even the army was disorganized. Some great generals and a crowd of excellent officers had fallen, and it had been impossible to supply their places. The difficulty of finding recruits had, towards the close of the war, been so great, that selection and rejection were impossible. Whole battalions were composed of deserters or of prisoners. It was hardly to be hoped that thirty years of repose and industry would repair the ruin produced by seven years of havoc. One consolatory circumstance, indeed, there was. No debt had been incurred. The burdens of the war had been terrible, almost insupportable; but no arrear was left to embarrass the finances in the time of peace.*

It remains for us, in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the man, to contemplate Frederick's character in peace.

The first and most immediate object of Frederick's attention and anxiety was the re-establishment of his army, in order that no enemy might hope to reap advantage from a sudden renewal of hostilities. In order to bring the recently levied troops upon a par with his veteran, well-trained warriors—of whom, however, but a very small number still remained—

* The reader will not need to be reminded that the narrative of Macaulay ends here. The descent from the sunny uplands of his style is sudden and painful, but there is no help for it. Herr Kohlrausch goes on honestly enough, and we must let him finish the story or go without it altogether. Patience; it will soon be over, and as a sugar-plum for good children, we promise you near the close a gorgeous picture of the great king in his old age, by Carlyle.

military exercise and drilling were enforced with the most rigorous exactness. But the illustrious monarch himself, when he beheld the whole of Europe adopt his military tactics, was deceived in the over-estimation of their value. The system of maintaining standing armies was carried to the highest point, and became the principal object in the administration of every State; grave utility degenerated into mere display, until a grand convulsion of the world made its vanity and puerility but too apparent.

The care taken by Frederick to effect the restoration of his overwhelmed country was a much more beneficent employment of his energies, and was productive of incalculable good. It formed the most imperishable leaf in his wreath of glory. The corn which was already bought-up for the next campaign he bestowed upon the most destitute of his people, as seed for sowing, together with all his superfluous horses. The taxes were remitted for six months in Silesia, and for two years in Pomerania and Neumark, which were completely devastated. Nay, the king, in order to encourage agriculture and industry, appropriated large sums of money for that purpose in proportion to the greatness of the exigency, and these various sums amounted altogether, during the four-and-twenty years of his reign after the peace of Hubertsburg, to no less than twenty-four millions of dollars. Such noble generosity redounds still more to the glory of Frederick, inasmuch as it was only practicable through the exercise of great economy, and to promote which he subjected himself to every

personal sacrifice. His maxim was that his treasure belonged not to himself, but to the people who supplied it; and while many other princes—not bearing in mind the heavy drops of sweat which adhered to each of the numerous gold pieces wrung from their subjects—only thought of dissipating the entire mass in the most unlicensed prodigality and waste, he lived in a style so simple and frugal that out of the sum appropriated to the maintenance of his court he saved annually nearly a million of dollars.

He explained on one occasion to M. de Launay, the assessor of indirect taxes, the principles by which he was actuated in this respect, in clear and distinct terms: “Louis XV. and I,” he said, “are born more needy than the poorest of our subjects; for there are but few among them who do not possess a small inheritance, or who cannot at least earn it by their labor and industry; while he and I possess nothing, neither can we earn anything but what must belong to the State. We are merely the stewards appointed for the administration of the general fund; and if, as such, we were to apply to our own personal expenditure more than is reasonably necessary, we should, by such proceeding, not only bring down upon ourselves severe condemnation in the first place for extravagance, but likewise for having fraudulently taken possession of that which was confided to our charge for the public weal.”

The particular care and interest shown by the king in the cultivation of the soil, produced its speedy improvement. Large tracts of land were rendered arable, fresh supplies of laborers were pro-

cured from other countries, and where formerly marsh and moor were generally prevalent, fertile, flourishing corn-fields were substituted instead. These happy results, which greeted the eye of Frederick whenever he took his regularly appointed journeys throughout his dominions, were highly grateful to his feelings; while during these tours of survey nothing escaped his acutely observing mind; so much so, that few sovereigns could boast of such a thorough knowledge of their domains—even to the most trifling details—as the king of Prussia acquired of his own estates through continual and indefatigable application to this one object. Silesia, which had suffered so much, was especially dear to his feelings, and to that territory he devoted particular attention; when, therefore, upon a general census in the year 1777, he found it contained 180,000 more inhabitants than in the year 1756, when the war commenced; and when he perceived the losses sustained during that war thus amply repaired, and the glorious results produced by agricultural labor and commercial enterprise, he, in the gladness of his heart, expressed, in a letter to his friend Jordan, the sensations he felt at beholding the flourishing state of a province the condition of which was but a short time before so sadly depressed and miserable.

Industry is indispensable in a people who depend on their energy and activity for their rank among nations; but this rank is not the only attendant advantage: a benefit far greater is the fresh, healthy vigor it imparts to the people. And in this respect Frederick the Great was a striking example, truly

worthy of imitation by all his subjects; for even during the early period of his life he already wrote to his friend Jordan thus: "You are quite right in believing that I work hard; I do so to enable me *to live*, for nothing so nearly approaches the likeness of death as the half slumbering, listless state of idleness." And, subsequently, when he had become old and feeble, this feeling still retained its power, and operated with all its original influence upon his mind, for in another letter to the same friend he says: "I still feel as formerly the same anxiety for action; as then, I now still long to work and be busy, and my mind and body are in continual contention. It is no longer requisite that I should live, unless I can live and work."

And truly, in making a profitable use of his time, King Frederick displayed a perseverance which left him without a rival; and even in his old age he never swerved from the original plan he had laid down and followed from his earliest manhood, for even on the very day before his death he was to be seen occupied with the business of his government. Each hour had its occupation, and the one grand principle which is the soul of all industry—viz., *to leave over from to-day nothing for the morrow*—passed with Frederick as the inviolable law of his whole life. The entire day—commencing at the hour of four in the morning and continuing until midnight, accordingly five sixths of the day—was devoted to some occupation of the mind or heart, for in order that even the hour of repast might not be wholly monopolized by the mere gratification of the stom-

ach, Frederick assembled around him at midday and in the evening a circle of intellectual men, and these *conversazioni*—in which the king himself took an important share—were of such an animated and enlivening nature that they were not inaptly compared to the entertainments of Socrates himself. Unfortunately, however, according to the taste of that age, nothing but witticisms and humorous sallies were made the subject of due appreciation and applause. Vivacity of idea promptly expressed, and strikingly *apropos* allusions, were the order of the day, while profundity of thought and subjects of more grave and serious discussion were banished as ill-timed and uncalled for—a necessary consequence arising from the exclusive adoption of the French language, which formed the medium of communication at these *réunions* of Frederick the Great. The rest of the day was passed in the perusal of official dispatches, private correspondence, and ministerial documents, to each of which he added his replies and observations in the margin. After having gone through this all-important business routine of the day, he directed his attention to the more recreative occupations of his pleasure-grounds and literary compositions—of which latter Frederick has left behind him a rich collection; and finally, as a last resource of amusement, he occasionally devoted a few stolen moments to his flute, upon which he was an accomplished performer. This, his favorite instrument, indeed, like an intimate and faithful friend, served often to allay the violent excitements of his mind while he strolled with it through his

suite of rooms, often for hours together, his thoughts, as he himself relates, became more and more collected, and his mind better prepared for calm and serious meditation. Nevertheless, he never permitted affairs of state to be neglected for the sake of the enjoyments he sought both in music and in poetry; and in this point of view Frederick's character must ever command respect and admiration.

The government of Frederick was despotic in the strictest sense of the word; everything emanated from the king, and everything reverted to him again. He never accorded any share in the administration to an assembly of States, nor even to the State Council, which, composed of the most enlightened men, would have been able to have presented to their sovereign, in a clear and comprehensive light, the bearings of the intricate questions connected with government. He felt in himself the power to govern alone, seconded by the strongest desire of making his people happy and great. Thence it appeared to his mind that the predominant strength of a State was based upon the means which are the readiest and most efficacious in the hands of one person; viz., in his army, and in the treasury. His chief aim, therefore, was to manage that these two powerful implements of government should be placed in the most favorable condition possible; and thus we find that Frederick often sought the means to obtain this, his grand object, without sufficiently taking into consideration the effect they might subsequently produce upon the disposition and morality of the nation. In accordance with this principle, he,

in the year 1764, invited a distinguished fermier-general of France, Helvetius, to Berlin, in order to consult him upon the means of augmenting the revenues of the State; and in consequence of his suggestions, measures were adopted which were extremely obnoxious to the public, and caused many to defraud, instead of co-operating with, the government. At the same time, however, by these and other means resorted to by the king, the revenues of the kingdom were increased considerably. It must, however, be advanced in Frederick's vindication, first, that he adopted these measures, not for his own individual advantage, but for the benefit of all; and secondly—we must again repeat it—that the great errors of the age completely obscured his own view. With what eagerness would not his clear mind have caught at the enlightenment produced by reform, had he but lived in a time when freedom of thought was more appreciated; for to him this freedom of thought was so dear that he never attacked the public expression of opinion. His subjects enjoyed under his reign, among other privileges, that of the liberty of the press; and he himself gave free scope to the shafts of censure and ridicule aimed against his public and private character, for the consciousness of his own persevering endeavors in the service of his country, and of his sincere devotion to his duties, elevated him beyond all petty susceptibility. The chief object of the king's care was a search into truth and enlightenment, as it was then understood. But this enlightenment consisted in a *desire to understand everything; to analyse, dia-*

sect, and—demolish. Whatever appeared inexplicable was at once rejected; faith, love, hope, and filial respect—all those feelings which have their seat in the inmost recesses of the soul—were destroyed in their germination.

But this annihilating agency was not confined to the State; it manifested itself also in science, in art, and even in religion. The French were the promoters of this phenomenon, and in this they were eventually imitated throughout the world, but more especially in Germany. Superficial ornament passed for profound wisdom, and witty, sarcastic phraseology assumed the place of soundness and sincerity of expression. Nevertheless, even at this time there were a few chosen men who were able to recognize that which was true and just, and raised their voices accordingly; and, in the world of intellect, the names of Lessing, Klopstock, Goethe, etc., need alone be mentioned, being, as they were, the founders of a more sterling age. They were joined by many others, and thus united they constituted an intellectual phalanx in opposition to the progress made by the sensual French school. These intellectual reformers were soon strengthened by such auxiliaries as Kant, Fichte, Jacobi, etc., who advanced firmly under the banner of science; and from such beginnings grew, by degrees, that powerful mental reaction which has already achieved such mighty things, and led the way to greater results still.

This awakening of the German mind was unnoticed by King Frederick; he lived in the world of

French refinement, separate and solitary, as on an island. The waves of the new, rushing stream of life passed without approaching him, and struck against the barriers by which he was inclosed. His over-appreciation and patronage of foreigners, however, impelled the higher classes of society to share in his sentiments, equally as much as his system of administration had served as a model for other rulers to imitate. Several among his contemporaries resolved, like him, to reign independently, but without possessing the same commanding genius, whence however well-intentioned, they were wrecked in their career; among whom may be more especially included Peter III. of Russia, Gustavus III. of Sweden, and Joseph II. of Germany.

In the year 1765 Joseph II. was acknowledged as successor to his father, Francis I., who died in the same year, but whose acts as emperor present little or nothing worthy of record. His son, however, was, on this very account, the more anxious to effect great changes; to transform ancient into modern institutions, and to devote the great and predominating power with which he was endowed towards remodelling the entire condition of his States. All his projects, however, were held in abeyance until the death of his mother, Maria Theresa, in 1780, who, ever wise and active, had, even to the last moments of her existence, exercised all her power and influence in the administration of affairs; and, accordingly, her maternal authority operated effectually upon his feelings as a son, and served for a time to suspend the accomplishment of his desires. Mean-

time, in the interval between the years 1765 and 1790, various events took place which exercised an important influence upon the last ten years of his reign. Among the rest may be more especially mentioned the *dismemberment of Poland* in 1773, and the war of the *Bavarian succession* in 1778.

Augustus III., King of Poland, died in the year 1765, leaving behind him a grandson, only as yet a minor; consequently the house of Saxony, which had held possession of the throne of Poland during a space of sixty-six years, now lost it. Both Russia and Prussia stepped forward forthwith, and took upon themselves the arrangement of the affairs of Poland: an interference which that nation was now unable to resist, for, strong and redoubtable as it had been formerly, dissension had so much reduced its resources that it was, at this moment, wholly incapable of maintaining or even acting for itself. Both powers required that Poland should choose for her sovereign a native-born prince, and an army of ten thousand Russians which suddenly advanced upon Warsaw, and an equal number of Prussian troops assembled upon the frontiers, produced the election of Stanislaus Poniatowski to the throne. Henceforth there was no longer an imperial diet held at which foreigners did not endeavor to bring into effect all their influence.

Shortly after this event, a war took place between Russia and Turkey, in which the former took possession of Moldavia and Wallachia, which that power was extremely desirous of retaining. This, however, Austria opposed most strenuously, lest

Russia should become too powerful, and Frederick the Great found himself in a dilemma how to maintain the balance between the two parties. The most expedient means of adjustment appeared in the end to be the spoliation of a country which was the least able to oppose it; viz., Poland; and, accordingly, a portion of its territory was seized and shared between the three powers—Russia, Prussia, and Austria. With whom this idea first originated has not been clearly ascertained, but it is easy to see that it was quite in accordance with the character of the times. For as the wisdom of that age only based its calculations upon the standard of the senses, and estimated the power of States merely by their square miles, amount of population, soldiers, and revenue, the grand aim of the then State policy was to devote every effort towards aggrandizement; nothing was held more desirable than some fresh conquest, which might advantageously round off a kingdom, while all consideration of equity and justice was forced to yield before this imperious principle. When one of the larger States effected such an acquisition, the others, alarmed, considered the balance of Europe compromised and endangered.

In this case, however, the three kingdoms bordering upon Poland, having shared between them the spoil, were each augmented in proportion, whence all fear of danger was removed. This system had become so superficial, so miserable and absurd, that they lost sight altogether of the principle that a just equilibrium and the permanent safety of all can only

be secured by the inviolable preservation of the rights of nations. The partition of Poland was the formal renunciation itself of that system of equipoise, and served as the precursor of all those great revolutions, dismemberments, and transformations, together with all those ambitious attempts at universal monarchy, which, during a space of five-and-twenty years, were the means of convulsing Europe to her very foundations.

The people of Poland, menaced as they were in three quarters, were forced in the autumn of 1773 to submit to the dismemberment of their country, of which, accordingly, three thousand square miles were forthwith divided between Russia, Prussia, and Austria.

Maximilian Joseph, elector of Bavaria, having died in 1777 without issue, the inheritance of his estates and electoral dignity came into the hands of the elector palatine. The emperor Joseph, however, with his usual rashness, resolved to avail himself of this inheritance in favor of Austria; he accordingly raked up old claims, and marched suddenly with his army into Bavaria, of which he took immediate possession. The pacific palatine, Charles Theodore, thus surprised and overawed, signed a treaty by which he ceded two-thirds of Bavaria to the house of Austria, in order to secure to himself possession of at least the other third. The conduct of Austria, on this occasion, together with the part she had previously taken in the dismemberment of ill-fated Poland, was the more unexpected, inasmuch as she was the only one of all the superior States which had hither-

to abstained from similar acts of aggression. But the mutability of the age had now destroyed likewise in Austria the uniform pacific bearing for which she had so long been distinguished.

These proceedings gave rise to serious commotions in various parts of the empire, and Frederick the Great more especially felt he could not and ought not to remain an inactive observer of what was passing. Accordingly he entered the lists against Austria at once, and commenced operations as protector of the heir of Charles Theodore, the Duke of Deux-Ponts, who protested against the compact signed by the former with Austria, and claimed the assistance of the king of Prussia. The young and hot-headed emperor Joseph accepted the challenge forthwith, and taking up a position in Bohemia, he there awaited the king; the latter, who had already crossed the mountains, finding him, however, so strongly intrenched, was reluctant to hazard an attack under such difficult circumstances, and withdrew from Bohemia. After a few unimportant skirmishes between the light troops of both sides, peace was signed, by the mediation of France and Russia, at Teschen, on the 18th of May, 1779, even before the end of the first year of the war. The empress Maria Theresa, now advanced in years, by no means shared in her son's taste for war, but, on the contrary, earnestly desired peace; while Frederick himself, who had nothing to gain personally by this campaign, was equally anxious for a reconciliation. Moreover, he was likewise far advanced in years, and possessed an eye sufficiently penetrating to perceive that the former original spirit and energy

of the army, which had performed such prodigies of valor in the war of Seven Years, had now almost disappeared, although the discipline under which it was still placed was equally severe and tyrannical as in former times. Under these and other circumstances, therefore, peace was preferable to war. By the treaty now concluded, Austria restored to the palatine house all the estates of Bavaria, except the circle of Burgau, and the succession was secured to the Duke of Deux-Ponts.

After the death of Maria Theresa, in 1780, Joseph II. strove, with all the impetuosity of his fiery and enterprising nature, to bring into immediate execution the great and ambitious plans he had formed, and to give to the various nations spread over the boundless surface of his vast possessions one unique and equal form of government, after a model such as he had himself formed within his own mind.

Joseph adopted as his model the absolute principles of Frederick in his system of government; but Frederick occupied himself more with external arrangements, with the administration of the State, the promotion of industry, and the increase of the revenue, interfering very little with the progress of intellectual culture which followed its particular course, often altogether without his knowledge; while in this respect Joseph, by his new measures, often encroached upon the dearest privileges of his subjects. He insisted certainly upon liberty of conscience and freedom of thought; but he did not bear in mind, at the same time, that the acknowledgment of this principle depended upon that close conviction

which cannot be forced, and can only exist in reality when the light of truth has gradually penetrated to the depth of the heart.

The greatest obstacles, however, thrown in the way of Joseph's innovations proceeded from the church; for his grand object was to confiscate numerous monasteries and spiritual institutions, and to change at once the whole ecclesiastical constitution; that is, he contemplated obtaining during the first year of his reign what would of itself have occurred in the space of half a century.

By this confiscation of ecclesiastical possessions more than one neighboring prince of the empire, such as the bishop of Passau and the archbishop of Salzburg, found themselves attacked in their rights, and did not hesitate to complain loudly; and in the same way, in other matters, various other princes found too much reason to condemn the emperor for treating with contempt the constitution of the empire. Their apprehensions were more especially increased when the emperor, in the year 1785, negotiated a treaty of exchange of territory with the electoral prince-palatine of Bavaria, according to which the latter was to resign his country to Austria, for which he was to receive in return the Austrian Netherlands under the title of a new kingdom of Burgundy: an arrangement by which the entire south of Germany would have come into the exclusive possession of Austria. The prince-palatine was not at all indisposed to make the exchange, and France, as well as Russia, at first favored it in its principle; but Frederick II. once more stepped forward and disconcerted

their plans, in which he succeeded likewise in bringing Russia to co-operate with him.

The commotions, however, produced by these efforts made by Joseph to bring his rash projects into immediate operation, caused the old king of Prussia to form the idea of establishing an alliance of the German princes for the preservation of the imperial constitution, similar in character to the unions formed in previous times for mutual defense. Such at least was to be the unique object of this alliance according to the king's own words; and this league was accordingly effected, in the year 1785, between Prussia, Saxony, Hanover, the Dukes of Saxony, Brunswick, Mecklenburg, and Deux-Ponts, the Landgrave of Hesse, and several other princes, who were soon joined by the Elector of Mentz. This alliance was based upon principles in their nature less inimical than strictly surveillant; nevertheless, it effected the object contemplated by acting as a check upon the house of Austria in the various innovations threatened by the emperor, while it operated as a lesson indicating to that house that its real distinction among the other nations of Europe was to preserve the present order of things, to protect all rights and privileges, to oppose the spirit of conquest, and thus to constitute itself the bulwark of universal liberty; but failing in all this, it must inevitably lose at once all public confidence. This alliance of princes, however, produced little or no important results for the advantage of Germany, owing partly to the death of Frederick II., which took place in the following year, and partly to the

circumstance of the successors of Joseph II. happily returning to the ancient hereditary principles of the house, both in its moderation and circumspection; and, finally, owing to the unheard-of events which transpired in Europe during the last ten years of this century, and which soon produced too much cause for forgetting all previous minor grievances.

This alliance of the princes of the empire was the last public act of the great Frederick of any consequence; and he died in the following year. He continued active and full of enterprise to the last, in spite of his advanced age; but his condition became gradually more isolated, inasmuch as all the companions of his former days had in turns disappeared and sunk into their last resting-place before himself, the last among them being the brave old warrior Ziethen, who died in the January previous of the same year as his royal master, at the age of eighty-seven; and, on the other hand, heaven had not blessed him with any family, and thus he was debarred from the endearing enjoyment experienced by a father, when he sees himself growing young again, and revived in his posterity. At the same time, he was wanting in all those feelings conducive to this state of life—a state against which his whole nature recoiled.*

* "About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short time in the afternoon, or you might have met him elsewhere at an earlier hour, riding or driving in a rapid, business manner on the open roads or through the scraggy woods and avenues of that intricate, amphibious Potsdam region, a highly interest-

His mind, with scarcely any interruption, retained all its power during the long space of seventy-four years, although his body had latterly become much reduced and enfeebled. Through the extravagant use he had always made of strong spices and French dishes, he dried up the springs of life, and after suffering severely from dropsy, he departed this life on

ing, lean, little old man, of alert though slightly stooping figure; whose name among strangers was King *Friderick the Second*, or Frederick the Great of Prussia, and at home among the common people, who much loved and esteemed him, was *Vater Fritz*—Father Fred—a name of familiarity which had not bred contempt in that instance. He is a king every inch of him, though without the trappings of a king. Presents himself in a Spartan simplicity of vesture; no crown but an old military cocked-hat—generally old, or trampled and kneaded into absolute *softness* if new;—no scepter but one like Agamemnon's, a walking-stick cut from the woods, which serves also as a riding-stick (with which he hits the horse 'between the ears,' say authors); and for royal robes, a mere soldier's blue coat with red facings, coat likely to be old, and sure to have a good deal of Spanish snuff on the breast of it; rest of the apparel dim, unobtrusive in color or cut, ending in high, over-knee, military boots, which may be brushed (and, I hope, kept soft with an underhand suspicion of oil), but are not permitted to be blackened or varnished; Day and Martin with their scot-pots forbidden to approach.

"The man is not of godlike physiognomy, any more than of imposing stature or costume: close-shut mouth with thin lips, prominent jaw and nose, receding brow, by no means of Olympian height; head, however, is of long form, and has superlative gray eyes in it. Not what is called a beautiful man; nor yet, by all appearance, what is called a happy. On the contrary, the face bears evidence of many sorrows, as they are termed, of much hard labor done in this world; and seems to anticipate nothing but more still coming.

the 17th of August, 1786, and was buried in Potsdam, under the pulpit of the church belonging to the garrison.

In his last illness Frederick displayed great mildness and patience, and acknowledged with gratitude the trouble and pain he caused those around him. During one of his sleepless nights he called to the

Quiet stolicism, capable enough of what joy there were, but not expecting any worth mention; great unconscious and some conscious pride, well tempered with a cheery mockery of humor—are written on that old face; which carries its chin well forward, in spite of the slight stoop about the neck; snuffy nose rather flung into the air, under its old cocked-hat—like an old snuffy lion on the watch; and such a pair of eyes as no man or lion or lynx of that century bore elsewhere, according to all the testimony we have. 'Those eyes,' says Mirabeau, 'which, at the bidding of his great soul, fascinated you with seduction or with terror (*portaient, au gré de son âme heroique, la séduction ou la terreur*).' Most excellent, potent, brilliant eyes, swift-darting as the stars, steadfast as the sun; gray, we said, of the azure-gray color; large enough, not of glaring size, the habitual expression of them vigilance and penetrating sense, rapidity resting on depth. Which is an excellent combination; and gives us the notion of a lambent outer radiance springing from some great inner sea of light and fire in the man. The voice, if he speak to you, is of similar physiognomy: clear, melodious, and sonorous; all tones are in it, from that of ingenuous inquiry, graceful sociality, light-flowing banter (rather prickly for most part), up to definite word of command, up to desolating word of rebuke and reprobation; a voice 'the clearest and most agreeable in conversation I ever heard,' says witty Dr. Moore. 'He speaks a great deal,' continues the doctor; 'yet those who hear him regret that he does not speak a great deal more. His observations are always lively, very often just; and few men possess the talent of repartee in greater perfection.'

page who kept watch in the room, and asked him what o'clock it was. The man replied it had just struck two. "Ah, then it is still too soon!" exclaimed the king, "but I cannot sleep. See whether any of the other attendants are awake, but do not disturb them if they are still sleeping, for, poor fellows, they are tired enough. But if you find Neuman (his favorite yäger) stirring, say to him you believe the king wishes soon to rise. But mind, do not awaken any one!"

Although the news of Frederick's death at such an advanced age excited no very great astonishment, it nevertheless produced a considerable sensation throughout the whole of Europe. He left to his successor a well-regulated State, containing a population of six millions of inhabitants; a powerful, strictly organized army, and a treasury well provided; the greatest treasure, however, he left was the recollection of his heroic and glorious acts, which in subsequent times has continued to operate upon his nation with all its awakening power and heart-stirring influence.

